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THE STATUE OF COLUMBUS AT COLON

Columbus is represented in a long Spanish robe with his hand upon the shoulder of a somewhat classic-looking Indian. Colon (formerly Aspinwall) is at the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal works



MR. EDWARD ROSE (LATE OF THE "SUNDAY TIMES").

COLUMBUS.

COLUMBUS:
A HISTORICAL PLAY,

In Five Acts.

BY

EDWARD ROSE.

LONDON:
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.
1873.

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HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
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EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1846

TO MY FATHER

CALEB ROSE

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY.

ACTING EDITION.

It is hoped that the condensation which this drama has undergone has rendered it a really practicable and effective stage play. At some future time the Author may perhaps issue a complete and thoroughly revised Edition, in which much that is now omitted may find a place.

Readers of Washington Irving's admirable "Life of Columbus" will find therein almost the whole foundation of this play, and the hints from which the character and story of Beatrix have been developed.

September, 1873.

COLUMBUS.

CHARACTERS.

FERDINAND *the 5th. (King of Spain.)*

JUAN RODRIGUEZ DE FONSECA. (*Bishop of Burgos.*)

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

DIEGO. (*His son.*)

FERDINANDO DE TOLEDO. (*Grand Commander of Leon.*)

JUAN PEREZ DE MARCHENA. (*A Gray Friar.*)

XIMENO DE BREVIESCA.

ALONZO DE VILLEJO.

MARTIN ALONZO PINZON.

GOMEZ RASCON.

MIGUEL BALLESTER.

RODRIGO DE TRIANA.

DON LUIS.

DON RUIZ.

} (*Courtiers.*)

} (*Sailors.*)

Sailors, Courtiers, Citizens, &c.

ISABELLA. (*Queen of Spain.*)

BEATRIX ENRIQUEZ.

MARIA DE TOLEDO.

Period: 1492—1506.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Palace at Santa Fe. A large court, with gateway up L. C. Early morning.—COLUMBUS asleep in gateway.*

Enter BEATRIX and MARIA, with arms entwined, R.

BEATRIX. I love to wander when the day is new
And hark to the awaking of a world.
There is a fresh wind blowing, and a hum
Of life all round us.

MARIA. Did you hear the lark
That sang so high above the topmost tower?
Early, methought, he left his family
To soar in dizzy regions out of sight—
I would not be the mate of master lark!

BEAT. Oh, that would I!

MAR. I thought you'd never wed?

BEAT. Not with the shallow nobles of the court,
Nor grovelling traders of the city,—no!
But oh, Maria, if a mate I had
From whom at early morn I might unclasp
My arms, and never sigh, but bravely point

To heaven, and say "There is thy home! Go seek
Fresh worlds, untrodden by the foot of man!
Up, up! Dare all, for all awaits thee there!
Soar higher, higher, into purer skies,
Where air is thinner, heaven nigh, earth lost,
And think not of the arms that thou hast left
Nor the weak woman's heart that sighs for thee,
But feel around thy soul enwrap my soul—
Know that one trusts thee, though all else deride,
Thine, thine, however far,—still true to thee,
Still fond, still proud, brave mate of mine, thy wife!"

MAR. Beatrix! Is this the haughty sovereign maid
Who freezes lovers, laughs at doughty deeds
Done 'gainst the fallen Moor,—who will not deign
To smile upon the daring matador,
And scoffs alike at rapier, doublet, lute,
Soft voice and flashing eye?

BEAT. Oh they are brave
These cavaliers of Spain, that fill the town
With shout and revelry and rare attire,
Because, after eight centuries or so
Of fruitless struggle 'gainst a sterner race,
Castile and Arragon at length have crushed
The band of infidels that held them down
By the sheer strength of Moorish brain and heart!
Oh, they are brave,—in speech, in dress,—

MAR. In fight.
Beatrix, you speak to one of Alva's blood.

BEAT. In fight, I own it. Hand to hand, with forces
Not too unequal, Spanish soldiery

Will fight—like lions. What I want is *men*.

MAR. And are not these men?

BEAT. They have beards indeed:
Their voices are not weak and shrill as ours
But ring—O God, why was I born a woman?
O for a man's soul, strong and true and silent!
Looking with keen eyes past the vulgar gaze,
Daring what none had dared or dreamt before,
Dauntless and patient, brave, too proud for pride,
Too loving for love-babble,—not a dreamer,
But strong to make wild visions living truths.
Give me this man, and I will give him that
Shall make him king of all men!

MAR. What?

BEAT. My soul!
Then interfused, in speechless ecstasy,
We would breathe such thoughts that the world should rise
Borne on our wings, higher, to the clear air,
Where in the silent heaven we feel God's voice!
(*A long pause.*)

There is no such man—O World! there is no such man!
(*Sinks sobbing on MARIA's neck.*)

MAR. Why, Beatrix! my silly school-girl sweetheart!
Never weep for a man that does not live!
Weep not for any man: have you not me
To love you—O to worship my old Beaty?
I used at school, when we were very little,
To call you my Saint Beatrix: and now
I do believe that you can never sin.

BEAT. I never sin? Maria, the day may come

When you, and such as you, will turn from me
With loathing.—O, I have a devil in me,
Pride, Hate, Unfaith,—and that the fathers say
Is worst of all,—I know not what may hap.

Maria, say you will be true to me—

Whatever chance, you still will be my sister!

MAR. Though all that woman's heart can dream of
horror

Should come to pass—though Madrid take the fashion
From Santa Fé: though poverty be honoured:
Though one sad dress be worn through a whole summer—
Nay more, though all be dressed alike as nuns—
Nay more, though Beatrix find the man she seeks—
Still through all change I will not change to thee,
Still my heart's blood to its last drop is thine!

BEAT. (*kisses her,—laughingly.*) Thanks, pretty one, for
thy tremendous oath.

MAR. It was an oath! I'm hungry after it.
Let's in to breakfast. (*They go up.*) Ha! what ship-
wrecked mariner

Thus ventures in the palace-yard —

BEAT. To sleep?

Is't such an awful crime?

MAR. Oh, Breviesca

Would faint to hear of it.

BEAT. (*gazing at COLUMBUS.*) I like the face though.
A forehead that has battled with the world,
Cheeks ruddy with the salt wind's rough salute,
Hair dashed with grey, although he is not old.—
This is a *man*, Maria.

MAR. Dost not know him?
He's the mad Genoese who haunts the court
From town to town, and in the pause of battle
Tells wondrous stories of a western shore
That must perforce be hid beyond the seas.
Now the war's over, he's in hopes to gain
A hearing: which while Ferdinand is king,
And Fonseca of Burgos his adviser,
Will when obtained advantage Don Columbus
Exactly nothing.

BEAT. Columbus? Is there not
A page at Court of that name?

MAR. Oh, Diego—
This man's son; he is charming—but the father—

BEAT. Mad?

MAR. Oh, a dreamer!

BEAT. Still, his dreams are great.—
A western shore beyond the seas.

MAR. 'Tis what
Each credulous fisher talks of—A great island,
Two lofty hills and a deep vale, that's seen
On a fair day—then vanishes in mist!

BEAT. A dreamer?—No: I do not want a dreamer.
Keen eyes, not closed, I seek: an iron will,
Not golden visions.

MAR. See! he wakes. You've broken
His golden vision this time—with a fairer.

COLUMBUS. But three ships—only three—(*Leaping up.*)
O pardon, ladies,
That with my sluggish rest I bar your way.

BEAT. (*aside.*) Honest grey eyes. I like them. He is brave.

MAR. What make you at the court so early, sir ?
Fresh tidings of those wondrous shores that lie
Beneath our very eyes, would we but see them ?

COL. You know me, then ?

MAR. Who knows not Don Columbus ?
The gentleman of Genoa, who offers
Riches untold to all the world—Spain, England,
France, Genoa, Portugal,—which all the world,
Most unaccountably, will not accept.

COL. You laugh at me : well, I am used to it.
Laughter and arrow, foul play, stormy wave,
All have attacked me, none had power to wound.
There is a Buckler 'twixt me and my foes,
There is a Hand that guides me night and day ;
From childhood has a spirit of the Lord
Bent seaward all my impulse, fostering
With every friend, with every book, chance words
Of seaman and of sage, the wild longing
That draws me—thither : by the unknown way
To India's further shore. The sea that drowned
All others of my crew, rejected me—
Do men draw lots, the lot still falls on me—
Are portents seen, aye they come first to me.
Is not this then a calling to some deed
For the which *I* am set apart ?—The years
Roll on, nor seem to bring me nearer victory,
But never, since the mystic autumn eve
An angel whispered me my mission—never

Has my heart failed, my soul lost faith. Delay,
Refusal, scorn, what are these words men fear?
They are but breath of summer wind to me.

MAR. But where are those brave lands you speak of,
sir?

COL. (*to* BEAT.) Hast thou ne'er read, lady, the scroll
of Basil

That tells us of the Garden of the World,
Mankind's first home?—There four pure crystal rivers
Well from one fount to water all the land:
There tranquil summer, rich with autumn's fruit,
Joyous as spring, with the wild winter's beauty,
Reigns ceaseless, dreading never pelting hail
Nor drowning rain, nor cloud, nor forkèd lightning:
Thunder is silent there; and pinching cold
And panting heat—all, with the blustering winds,
Die at the gate of this fair paradise:
Where all is glad and gentle and serene,
Wherein throughout all nature ever reigns
Perpetual youth, and nought decays and dies.—
Lady, wouldst thou not know St. Basil's Eden?

BEAT. Eden? Aye, there is rest—and there alone
In all the world, I think.

COL. After the voyage
How sweet is such a haven!—After nights
Of perilous watching, starless, when the waves
Roll up to heaven, and with a mighty surge
Throw their vast bulk upon the tiny vessel—
Masts shatter, timbers yawn, black waters hide
Heaven from the drowning seaman—

Shall maid again be wedded wife of mine,
Nor joys of home enthrall my roving spirit.
Rove no more!—O salt wind that crossest ever
With new delight the pathless sea, do men
Strive to bind fetters on thy sweeping pinions,
Strive to enchain thy homeless spirit with gold?
Eagle, that swoopest from the mountain summit,
Lightning, wild laughter of the glorious storm,
Ye are my brothers—restless we must wander
For ever, till the world has found its goal!
No home, no wife, no golden chain shall bind me,—
Thou art my home, O world: O Sea, thou art my
bride! (*Goes up.*)

Enter DIEGO, *R.*

DIEGO. 'Twas rumoured yester-even at the court
My father had returned to meet the Council.
My father! for a year I have not seen him—
And in that year how things and men have changed,
I most of all! The hurry of the camp,
The constant watching an unwearied foe,
Have given place to triumphing revelry;
Stern soldiers now are careless maskers turned;
And I, that read grave scrolls with grizzled monks
From matins unto evensong, now plunge
Unfettered in the mid-stream of delight
That flows from evensong to matins here!

COL. (*coming down: aside.*) A courtier; I will ask
him if the Council
Are yet astir.—I prithee, sir,—

DIE. 'Tis he !

My father—but how aged in one sad year !

COL. Thy father ! Pray, sir page,—What, my Diego !
I knew thee not, my brave Sir Butterfly !

DIE. (*kneeling.*) Thy blessing, father.

COL. (*placing his hands on DIEGO'S head.*) It is thine,
dear lad.

Rise now, and let me clasp thee to my heart
Long parted from thee—Thou hast grown, Diego.
How call thee the court-maidens, man or boy ?

DIE. Within a month I am eighteen, my father.
None here dare call me boy,—save one indeed,
Who scoffs me ever for my monkish ways—
A maiden, two years younger than myself.

COL. A maiden tall and dark, with eyes and brow
Strong, steadfast, true, charged with a mighty secret
Of love unfathomed yet by man,—with folds
Of rolling hair dark as a midnight river,
And a voice rich and clear as summer night
Warm with undying promise of the day ?

DIE. That must be Lady Beatrix Enriquez,
The silent scornful Beauty of the court.
Her bosom-friend, strange contrast, school-companion,
Foil, rival, almost lover, is the one
I spoke of—bright Maria de Toledo,
First butterfly in waiting to the Queen.

COL. And Don Diego's first too dear tormentor.

DIE. (*aside.*) Aye, first—and last, and only. (*Aloud.*)
Who are these ?

*Enter JUAN PEREZ, PINZON, and RODRIGO DE TRIANA,
through gateway.*

RODRIGO. It is too early ; Señor Christopher
Will never be abroad yet.

JUAN PEREZ. 'Tis a man
Of simplest peasant ways—thou dost not know him.
See! he is here. (*Seizing his hands.*) Welcome, Columbus!

COL. Welcome!
Thou truest, only, friend! Thine honest face
Is like a slice of good substantial sunshine
Amid the cruel glitter and dreary fog
Of what men here call life.

PEREZ. Nay, is it true—
Welcome, my son Diego,—(*DIE. kisses his hand.*)—can
it be,
As I have heard, that even thou, Columbus,
Hast learnt the weary lesson of the world—
“Despair?” I’ll not believe it.

COL. I know not.
Delay—ever new delay: I am half turned coward—
And yet to see thy cheering face has manned me.
There are true hearts, blue sky, wide waters, hope,—
No, Juan Perez, I will *not* despair.

PER. Brave heart! And see, I bring good cheer with
me—
Martin Alonzo Pinzon, our chief man
Down in the little village thou dost love,
Who, fired with hope by echo of thy words
Even from my dull lips, will go with thee

Not only ne'er was false Triana known,
But never was one known at all, I think!

COL. First of his family? Good: he has a name
To win—'tis better than the crushing weight
Of a great name won for him.

PER. But, Columbus,
What of the conference?

COL. I think you mock me
To speak of it. Already twenty times
They have met, and talked and talked, and bowed, and
smiled,
Pleased with their own great greatness: compliments
I have had enow, and bitter taunts I have had,
But not an honest answer—yes or no.
To-day for the last time they meet—for the last time
I swear it shall be: if they now refuse me—
Nay, if again delay they counsel,—off
This night for England!

PER. England?

COL. What has Spain
Done for me, homeless wanderer, that I
Should care to leave her? She has been, indeed,
A second mother-country,—for like Genoa,
My own mother, she will none of me!

PER. Columbus,
Know'st thou not what is wrong with thee this morning?

COL. All things, I think.

PER. Oh, no: sheer want of food.
Come—these great nobles are not like to be
About their work so early. I have still,
Methinks, some influence at the buttery here—
Thou know'st, I was the Queen's confessor once.

COL. The Queen ! Could I but meet her face to face !

PER. She loves her old confessor—I will seek her
This morn, and strive to win her to thy cause. (*Going.*)

(*To DIEGO.*) Come, my old pupil, thou wilt join us,—
Sooth,

I long to hear what Latin thou hast gained
Since thou didst leave the cloister for the court.

DIE. Nay, father, I have duty here—we pages
Are not allowed at random to frequent
The buttery—there the wine is kept.

ROD. Aha !

Why dost not strike the rascal butler down
And take his wine ? Why, when I was a lad—

COL. Thou wilt make a brave man, my boy Diego :
Thou dost thy duty, and art not ashamed.
I am proud of thee—(*kisses his forehead*,)—I thank God
for my son. (*Exit L. with Pinzon.*)

PER. True—true : be brave—but don't forget thy
Latin. (*Exit.*)

ROD. Zounds, they will make a milksop of the boy.
Hear, Don Diego : when I was a lad
I cared no straw—San Juan, they've reached the buttery !
(*Runs off.*)

DIE. My father, greatest man in all the world,
Says he is proud of me—O if Maria
Could but have heard him ! Dare I dream she loves me ?
Sometimes I think so,—for she talks to me
More than to all the rest—albeit it is
But jest and mockery. And I—I love her.

Her voice is ever in all songs I hear,
Her eyes gleam from the lines of every scroll—
Ah, good Fray Perez, it is well thou knowst not
How swift thy pupil's Latin has ebbed away!
Maria, Maria, I have no thought but thee—
What wilt thou grant in answer to my life
Laid at thy feet?—thyself?—or two light words?

Enter MARIA, through gateway.

MAR. (*aside.*) Our sometime monk, Diego! O how
grave

And sober-earnest deep in love he looks!
Well, I must tease him—as I tease them all;
And yet—I wish the poor boy would not take it
So seriously: a careless word, a touch,
One of those glances eyes *will* sometimes give,
Brings the glad colour to his cheek—the lad
Has not forgot his blushes yet,—and I,
I care not for him: no, not e'en so much
As for Alonzo, Carlos, Pedro even,—
All soldiers grown. I'm sixteen: he—a child.

DIE. Well, I must in—Donna Maria! Pardon!
I did not see you.

MAR. Oh, we pardon monks—
Are they not always wrapt in holy thought?

DIE. I am no monk—

MAR. No? Well, we pardon children
Dreaming of how they best shall win—the moon.

DIE. Indeed, 'tis what I dreamt of. Far above me,
Stumbling in darkness here, there sails a planet

Peerless and stainless—O too fair for me,
Too bright, too heavenly pure,—(*seizing her hand.*) Maria,
I love thee! (*kneels.*)

MAR. Diego! Sir!—Arise! (*aside.*) What shall I do?
Meaning a moment's pleasure, I have won
A whole heart!—Sir, if this wild love be true
Prove it by leaving me.

DIE. Why?—Oh, Maria,
Is't then so certain thou canst never love me?
Sometimes I have thought thine eyes dwelt kindly on me—

MAR. Ah me, I did not mean it!—At the court
A lady's eyes rove—O those innocent cloisters!
Alas, what would my father say—

DIE. Is't he
Thou fearest? I will ask him.

MAR. Never—never!
He would almost kill thee—Mary Mother! he comes!

DIE. Thou wouldst not have me killed then?

MAR. No—not *killed*.

DIE. Would I not die for thee?

MAR. (*aside.*) Oh, he is brave!
—But know'st thou not his influence with the king?
He could have thee banished from the court—from me—

DIE. And that thou wouldst not, Maria?

MAR. (*disregarding the question.*) O I pray thee
Be wise! Thou art young, but I think thou canst be
wise!

See, I implore thee kneeling—(*Kneels. Aside.*) Now if he
Give way, will I never smile on him again!—
Canst thou deny me this—me, when I plead?

DIE. Yes—for I think thou lovest me! (*Raising her.*)

MAR. (*aside.*) He is right!

His warm touch thrilled me. Yet—he's but a boy:
And I—a silly girl!

Enter DE TOLEDO, R.

TOLEDO. Good morrow, little one. (*Kissing her.*) Give
ye good morrow,

Young sir. This morn we have to meet thy father,
The sailor, to confer on his proposal—
Fonseca, I, and others.

DIE. (*aside.*) If I anger him

My father's cause is lost. What should I do?

MAR. (*aside.*) He wavers now the moment's here—a boy,
A coward boy!

TOL. I think, an honest man:

Tells straight out what he means and what he wants.
They say he's mad—maybe; but yet I like him.

DIE. (*aside.*) Aye: he would be straightforward—would
not woo

The maid behind her father's back, afraid
To face his anger: he'd do right, come death,
Ruin to all he loved, shame to himself,—
Don Ferdinando de Toledo!

TOL. Sir?

DIE. Thou art a Spanish noble, rich and great;
I, a poor foreigner, despised by all.
Yet we are both men: it may be, one day
I shall win a name as high as thine. If not,
Obscure and penniless, I am still a man:

MAR. There, father, leave a saint or two
For the next generation! If the boy
Were rough, presumptuous, he at least was brave—

TOL. Brave! I was ne'er so bearded in my life!
And by a nobody—a Genoese—
Maria, if thou ever, for a moment
Again dost give one look, one word, one thought,
To yon audacious scamp, thou'rt nevermore
Daughter of mine!

MAR. Oh father, canst thou think
My mind would for an instant dwell on him?
A beardless, rash, ungovernable boy!
(*Aside.*) O what a dreadful little cheat am I!
But 'tis a proverb, aye the Spanish girl
Lies to her father—till she has for dupe
A husband.—Diego! And I called him boy!
Dauntless, impassioned, how his eyes flashed fire!
With what a look of scorn he turned on me!
O he despised me then—and O I love him!
I'll go tell Beatrice I've found a man! (*Runs off, R.*)

TOL. Hum! There's a foolish flighty girl for you,
Unlike her sire—calm, quiet, placable,
Nought ever moves me from my even temper;
I know not anger—San Bartolomé,
How that young scullion braved me! O' my soul
I wonder that I did not strike him dead!
There was a hardihood about the scamp
That stayed my hand; it may be that one day
He'll make a soldier—God! He called me braggart!
Fernando de Toledo, Grand Commander
Of Leon, brother to Alva,—San Geronimo! (*Goes up.*)

Enter XIMENO DE BREVIESCA, Don LUIS and Don RUIZ, R.

XIMENO. So says the Bishop.

LUIS. Aye.

XIM. And if the Bishop

Says so, shall we deny 't?

RUIZ. Nay.

XIM. Right, Don Ruiz;

And thou, Don Luis, every whit as right!

But who's yon angered noble—De Toledo?

LUIS. It is, Ximeno.

XIM. What has fretted him?

RUIZ. I know not, Breviesca.

XIM. Notwithstanding,

I thank ye heartily both.—Why, what may mean

These hasty strides ——? (*To TOL. who comes down, C.*)

TOL. Pish! it is nothing. Now,

Is the Bishop ready?

XIM. He comes. But, Señor, tell us—

TOL. I'll tell thee nought, save that thou art a fool!

And that is news thou oft hast heard before.

XIM. Why, this is peevish.

LUIS. Marry, is it!

XIM. Thus

Should never gentleman of the court of Spain

Be treated.

RUIZ. Never, i' faith!

TOL. A gentleman—

And of the court of Spain! Thou renegade!

A Christian of some five years standing—why,

Thou yellow less than Moor, hadst not e'en courage
To be damned i' the good old way with thy forefathers!

XIM. Señor! dost taunt me that I am a Christian
Even as thyself?

TOL. As I? Why, slave, dost think
Had I—which Heaven forefend—been born a heathen
I'd e'er have sneaked out from my father's faith—
Unfaith, faith in the devil, though that faith were,—
For fear of some few million years in hell?
Bah! know'st not what a De Toledo is!

XIM. (*aside.*) I dare not brave him—he's too powerful:
Even Fonseca fears him.

Enter FONSECA, through gateway.

FONSECA. Ha! The Council
Chosen to meet this Christopher Columbus,
Is't not?

XIM. (*aside to Fon.*) I have chosen men we could de-
pend on:

All, save yon obstinate—

Fon. What, sirrah?

XIM. All,

I should say, save the noble De Toledo,
Will vote as thou: though why this hapless fool,
Columbus, should be crushed by thee, I know not.

Fon. Why shouldst thou know? Suffice it, crushed
he *shall* be.

Still, hast forgotten my reproof from the Queen
For tardy conduct of this man's affair?
Thinkst I should have forgot it—and dost deem

I'd give a chance to this ambitious layman
Ever to win a place i' the realm, above,
It might be, e'en the Church's highest servant ?

XIM. (*aside.*) In other words, thyself.—Here comes the
man.

Shall we to the council-chamber ?

LUIS (*going.*) 'Twould be well.

FOX. Nay, ceremony were but thrown away
On such a fellow as this—

RUIZ. 'Twere better not.

TOL. (*aside.*) Proud churchman, with thy parrots ! Thou
shalt find

I'm proud as thou—and if one voice can thwart thee
Mine be that voice ! True, the man's son has been
Insolent—but a Spanish nobleman
Stoops not to think of private injuries
When Spain demands his counsel or his sword.

Enter COLUMBUS, L.

COL. Most reverend sir, and noble gentlemen,
If, as I guess, you meet upon my business
Thus early, I am bound debtor to your courtesy.
Have you o'erlooked and thought on my proposal
Made six years since ?

FOX. We come for the last time
To hear thy scheme, and such objections urge
As Spain's first mariners and wisest churchmen
Have raised.

XIM. Come now—thy reasons !

COL. It is well.

First, of this orbèd earth, sage masters teach
Two-thirds already are explored—the rest
Mainly filled up by India's eastern regions;
Whither, say they, in few days might one pass
From Cadiz.—Then, how oft have daring seamen
Brought home report of some far distant shore
Viewed in their furthest wanderings,—

Fon. Aye ; and after
These many mighty mariners have sailed
For thousand years about the world, and sages
Its form as long have studied, is it not
Unmeet presumption in a man like thee,
An unknown sailor, powerless, unlearned,
To dream that a discovery so vast
Remains for thee to make ?

Luis. Indeed, is it.

RUIZ. Nay, Don Columbus: all our forefathers
Did very well without this western world—
Why want we more than they?

XIM. And dost not know
Right in thy path there lies the Torrid Zone—
A blazing band across the sea and sky?
O Sir, beware that Torrid Zone!

Luis. Ay, truly!
Some say it is the sword of fire that bars
From Paradise the sons of Adam.

RUIZ. Never
Will I believe this roundness of our earth.
I say 'tis flat—save and except the mountains :
And when thy ship has reached the end o' the world—

RUIZ. Nay, Luis! I am half i' the mind—

LUIS.

And I!

FON. (*aside to XIM.*) Breviesca! Those two fools are
wavering!

What's to be done?

XIM. (*to him.*)

Didst thou not say erewhile

The fellow's terms were over high?

FON.

'Twill do!

His pride shall ruin him.—(*To COL.*) One question, sir,
Ere aught else is decided. What reward
Claimst thou, if this discovery be made?

COL. The title and the privilege of Admiral,
And Viceroy o'er all countries I discover:
This, with the eighth part of all gains by trade
Or conquest,—as the eighth part I will furnish
Of the cost,—this do I claim as my reward.

XIM. But thou didst not claim more six years ago!

FON. Is it a prince that thus makes terms with us?
That with a brow unmoved, in kingly tone,
Claims thus an office which so near approaches
To the throne's awful dignity,—or is it
The man whom we have seen these many years
Follow the court, and wait in antechambers
A needy suppliant and thread-bare solicitor?
What say you? Shall this nameless Genoese
Dictate to us of Spain?

TOL. (*aside.*)

Father and son

In truth are unabashed enough. (*To COL.*) Come, sir,
Cannot more moderate conditions—such
As shall be honourable, advantageous,

Well worthy your acceptance—

COL. Not one point
Of my demands I cede.

XIM. Then we may say
This business now is at an end?

LUIS. Indeed,
Methinks it must be.

RUIZ. Ne'er can we consent
To such outrageous terms.

FON. Away! We lower
Our pride to sue this haughty suppliant longer.
The Council is dismissed. My lords, farewell!

(Exit, L.)

LUIS. Ay, part we—

RUIZ. Ne'er entreat him more!

XIM. Away!

Farewell, my friend; I hope to have the pleasure
Of never listening to thy voice again! *(Exeunt, L.)*

TOL. It goes against the grain even to be
One moment of a mind with those poor curs,
But in good truth, Don Christopher Columbus,
Thou art too proud. Beware of pride! It is
A sin contemptible, unworthy of man:
Of all faults have I ever avoided pride.

(Aside.) And that man's son dared woo my child—

San José! *(Exit, R.)*

COL. *(after a pause.)* Dead—every hope of Spain. Six
fruitless years.

—Shall all my life be wasted thus?—Despair,
Dost clutch my heart with thy lean fingers?—No:

I am not old yet, spite of years and trouble.
My life is at its ripest—Quick! I go
To other lands e'er age can near me.—Spain!
Farewell, O thou that should have been my country,
Whom I had given the vaward of the world,
But thou wouldst none of it: I leave thee: England
Shall grasp the mighty prize I offered thee,
Shall be the nations' mistress, if she know
When with a fearless hand to seize the gift
That Fortune offers once—and once alone.
Farewell, dear land that I have learned to love
Though thy heart melted never to me,—Lonely
Again I wander whither Heaven will! (*Goes up.*)

As he approaches gateway BEATRIX appears in it.

BEAT. (*not seeing him.*) Maria says the son is brave:
the father

Men laugh at as an obstinate visionary.
Men's laughter—that methinks I could not bear.
Yet he—the dreamer—braves it: coward girl
That I must be, who dare not!

COL. Lady Beatrix,

Before I go—

BEAT. (*starting.*) Señor! (*Aside.*) He has found
my name

Already!—Go? But wherefore shouldst thou go,
And whither?

COL. Wherefore? I am rejected here.
And whither? To England, where they say men thrive—
Not curs and monkeys, as in Spain.

BEAT. To England!

Desert our country!—Give a stranger land
The glory and dominion thou hast promised
To our dear mother—

COL. Nay, dost not forget
Spain is no home of mine? I am a stranger;
Scarce were it reason to expect of me—

BEAT. Talk not of reason! Dost not *thou* forget
I am a woman and a Spaniard? Home!
What home *can* be like my dear native land,
Sunlit and beautiful—that was heaven to me
When heaven seemed not so far away as now?

COL. (*aside.*) I thought she was a woman—'tis a child,
A foolish girl.—Farewell: love still thy country—

BEAT. Oh, thou wilt stay and help her, wilt thou not?
I will implore the Queen for gold, for ships,—
I know thou canst succeed—thou art no dreamer,—
Thou hast power, wisdom, courage—(*Aside.*) What do I
say?

What is it makes me thus forget my pride?
Oh Beatrix, Beatrix,—this is a man!

COL. (*aside.*) She has faith in me—she does not deem
me mad!

O if 'twere Spain that sent me forth, what welcome
Would this brave girl give me, when I returned
Crowned and a conqueror!—I love thy country:
I would fain serve thee: I will wait one hour longer.

BEAT. (*aside.*) I have won! I have won!—What?
Nought—a dream—it may be;
Yet have I won.—Sir, my heart has not words
To thank thee—but it is grateful. I seek the Queen:
Her soul is great, like thine,—O she will aid thee!

Enter ISABELLA and PEREZ, R.

ISABELLA. Aye, marvels, marvels! It was ever thus:
As Knowledge gropes its slow and cautious way
Bright Fancy peoples all beyond with wonders;
The twilight of our scanty wisdom shapes
Dim shadows into giants—

COL. (*coming down.*) I bring Dawn.
Great Queen, dear leader of a mighty people,
Hear a plain man's words—mark not shallow courtiers
Cruel in their folly. (*Taking a rolled-up map from his
breast.*) I have proved to them,
The bishop and his crew, a hundred times,
By simple logic, high authority,—

ISA. Sir, if thy words cannot convince our Council,
Whose wisdom is approved, e'en if thou win
A woman's brain with seeming reason, nought
Will it avail thee. I am not so proud
That over learned fathers' matured skill
I place my thought.

COL. Then will I win thy soul!
(*Throwing the map away.*) Go, words of man's poor
reason!—God's high voice
Shall speak for me! His Prophets have foretold,
His Holy Writ hath shadowed forth, my work.
Types and annunciations have I found,
Mysterious revelation, marvellous promise,
In scriptures that are dumb to other men.
Shall He not gather all nations and all tongues
To glorify His name?—Will not He destroy

The face of the covering cast over all people,
The veil spread over all nations?—Yea, the ends
Of the earth shall be brought together! Yea, the world
Shall clamour His praise beneath the exulting banner
Of the Redeemer, of the Shepherd who loves
For evermore the scattered sheep of his flock!
—(Pause.)—O chosen labourer, wilt thou draw back
Thy hand from the offered work?

PER. Thou wilt not hesitate—
Thou who hast fostered enterprises, greater
Of cost, more perilous,—thou dost not fear
To aid this, where so slight the loss can be,
The gain so glorious?

BEAT. Oh what regret
To thee, what triumph to thine enemies,
Should this of thee rejected enterprise
By other monarch be accomplished!—Think,
O think, dear Queen, how proud we are of thee,
Thy maidens,—make us proudest in the world!

ISA. Not till this moment have I known how great
How noble was thine aim, how light the cost.
To explore the secret wonders of the universe,
To loose the bonds that Ocean binds around us,
To spread the Holy Name—If but for me
This glory were reserved!

COL. O Queen, it is!
One word, and it is thine.

ISA. We are very poor.
How can I draw on Spain's exhausted treasury
For a measure Ferdinand, lord of half the realm,

Looks coldly on ?—I cannot cross my husband.

PER. Oh, for the glory of thy kingdom, madam,—

BEAT. Oh, for the sake of those proud hearts that
love thee !

COL. Nay, for his Name,—the Lord who died for thee !

(Pause.)

ISA. Not Spain, but mine own kingdom of Castile,
Shall bear this enterprise !—Ay, Columbus,
I'll pawn the dearest jewels of my crown
And thou shalt go ! *(Pause.)*

COL. *(raising his hands wildly.)* Success—success—O
God ! *(Staggers into PEREZ' arms.)*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Deck of COLUMBUS' Ship—the Santa Maria. It is a small vessel, partly decked, with high bows and stern—a castle on the latter. One mast, with sail set. A view of sea beyond. Evening. Starlight.*

COLUMBUS, DIEGO, PINZON, RODRIGO, GOMEZ RASCON, MIGUEL BALLESTER, and the rest of the crew, assembled at Vespers.—*A man on the look-out in the bows.*

VESPER HYMN.

Hail, Queen of heaven, Queen of love !

Though night is falling

Thou watchest o'er us from above,

Hearest our calling.

For ever dost thou pray for us,

Tossed on the trackless ocean thus.

O Mary, maid and mother, hail !

O hail, our Lady !

The stars that sparkle o'er us now

Are thy tears shining :

And the black clouds that wreath Night's brow

Thy dark hair twining.



Queen of our lives, we trust in thee—
Thy love, thy prayers, can rule the sea.
O Lady, mother, maiden, hail !
O hail, Mary !

RASCON (*down R. C., talking to RODRIGO and others.*)
Well, here's another day over ; and where are we ?

ROD. Aye—and how are we ? That's no pleasanter a question.

BALLESTER. Not drowned yet, Rodrigo de Triana.

PINZON. Nay, what with months of weary sailing ever forward, scarce veering a point from the west the whole voyage, seeking to find the end of this world,—I would I *were* past it, and in the next !

BAL. Thou, Martin Pinzon ? Why, who but thou won us all to the voyage ? Without thee, the captain would ne'er have got three crews together, 'spite of his royal mandates, his pressing men and ships—

RAS. Ay, curse him ! Pressed me and my mate Christoval Quintero with our brave little Pinta, that was never built to sail 'cross seas to the further end of nowhere ! If I had him to myself on the desert land he seeks—

BAL. Thou'dst be dumb, Gomez Rascon, as thou art now—He speaks ! and thou dar'est never open mouth to answer him.

A Sailor. Silence, silence ! The Captain speaks !

(*COLUMBUS has gone to the centre, about to speak.*)

COL. Messmates and dear friends, brothers in hope
and danger,

We are another day nearer the goal,
Another day we have been saved from peril,

COL. Spoken like a hero! See thou keep to that—and sleep not on the look-out to-night.

ROD. Sleep? Sir, the Trianas never sleep—

COL. 'Tis well: thou'lt make a tireless watchman.—
RASCON, thy face seems to speak an uneasy mind. What wouldst thou?

RAS. Nay, what should I want? Have we not, since first we set sail from Ferro, seen signs o' land enough to satisfy a shipfull of Admirals? Scarce had we started when we saw herons, pelicans, crabs, sparrows and tom-tits, that must needs have come from your western India,—why, methought e'en then land could scarce be two days' sail off. Nay, nay, I ask for no more signs.

Sailors. Let us turn back—turn back while there's yet time.

COL. Nay, friends, this is scarce reason. Sailing on lesser oceans at home do we see land-birds and river-weeds far from any shore? Have Nature's laws changed wholly—

PIN. Aye, have they! For here doth not the magnet—in Europe truest token of steadfast faith,—desert its ruler, and point ever further and further from the Northern Star? We have lost our sole guide; I bear no charm 'gainst death or witchcraft,—I am only a man as others; and, I confess it, I fear.

RAS. And I, brave Pinzon.

Sailors. Ay, ay,—we are but men: we fear!

ROD. I know not what the word means; but could a Triana fear, methinks I should fear now.

BAL. I have known fear—in my first battle I trembled:

but neither cowardly man nor changeable nature shall make me desert my commander. Ne'er mind these shivering sheep, Captain: the *men* 'll hold by thee.

COL. Right, brave old Miguel!—Friends, I look to you With trust unshaken still for trust and truth, Ready obedience, courage, help and love. Moreover, if ye wish—as what men would not Launching the first on perilous enterprise?— For a reward more ample than the sailor's Who safely coasts along his native shore Scarce losing sight of land—oh, be ye sure It shall be dealt you in no scanty measure!

RAS. Reward! Nay, were we but safe home again—

Sailors. Aye, home! Let us turn homewards! To Spain! Steer for Spain! Homewards!

COL. Silence, unmannerly fellows! What use, think ye, Is it to murmur thus against my will? Deem you these dastard grumblings e'er can move me? This expedition by our gracious sovereigns Was sent to seek the Indies—and by heaven, Happen what may, to this high enterprise, Am I unchangeably resolved to hold Till with God's blessing I accomplish it!

BAL. Hurrah! O' God's name let's stand by the captain!

Several Sailors. Hurrah! hurrah!

RAS. (*in a low tone.*) Nay, homewards—homewards.

Other Sailors (grumbling.) Homewards, homewards!

BAL. (*aside.*) Spite of these rascals, there are true hearts still;

I'll go and rouse them. (*Goes up. The crew gather into knots, and talk apart.*)

COL. (*coming down with DIEGO.*) Come to my cabin,
boy : I'll show thee all
My charts, tell thee my every plan : how far
'Tis now from the old shore, and from the new.
Thou shalt know everything.

DIE. (*taking his hand.*) Oh, my kind father !

COL. 'Tis sweet, Diego, to have one in the world
Before whose eyes, unmasked, unshielded, fearless,
The heart may rest in the warm light of love
Like a child who ne'er thinks of other's thought,
But knows the mother's eye that gazes loves him.
—Thou art this one to me ! (*Presses his hand and goes, L.*)

DIE. (*aside.*) O were *she* mine,
My one in all the world—to trust and love
With no least shadow of doubt ! Maria !—Pshaw !
Do I not despise her ?—What a fool I am !

(*Exit, L.*)

RAS. (*talking down R. with PINZON and RODRIGO.*) Nay,
didn't I say from the first the voyage could never prosper
with such a start ?

ROD. 'Twas gloomy enough, i'faith : all the village
in tears, the women—

RAS. Women, tears ! Thinkest thou such toys could
fright me ? Nay, man, remember—we started on a
Friday !

PIN. Tell the crew that—bid them remember that !
On Friday, of all days in the week, we must needs
start !

Sailor (talking to BALLESTER and others, up L.) But after the Canaries, Ballester,—dost not remember that huge peak vomiting flames and smoke? There was an evil omen for our voyage!

BAL. And dost not thou remember what the captain told us of it,—why, man, thou hast seen Etna at the same wild work thyself! Are we all turned old women by this two months' travel? (*During the ensuing dialogue Sailors gradually quit the stage.*)

RAS. Thou doubttest still, Rodrigo? Darest thou not join our plot—or dost yet believe in this mad Genoese?

ROD. Nay, he's certainly mad—and a Genoese. What cares he for the lives of Spanish gentlemen?

RAS. Aye—what's our risk to him? 'Tis plain he's content to throw away his own life for the chance of renown—

ROD. Renown we should not share! Who would remember our names?

PIN. (*aside.*) 'Tis truth—accursed truth! We do but work for his fame—not our own! (*Aloud.*) Who'd blame us, did we now give a thought to safety, and steer homeward e'er 'tis yet too late? (BAL. comes down to them.)

ROD. Should we not rather be extolled for the courage that undertook such emprise, and for so many months persisted in it?

BAL. Aye,—for the courage of a mouse would be extolled in thee! Never call Miguel Ballester messmate again, Triana,—thou art a coward! (*Exit, R.*)

ROD. A coward! Gentlemen, I pray you,—he called me coward!

RAS. Ne'er quarrel about names, man.—But this Columbus—

PIN. Would he not lay a complaint against us, did we make him return?

RAS. Let him: a friendless foreigner that all have spurned—he's friends in no rank: rather many whose pride of opinion were pleased at his failure.

PIN. True—but he's a man of brains: his words—

RAS. Silence them for ever! Hark ye—you are both men of valour.

ROD. True—very true indeed!

RAS. If he refuse, let's throw him into the sea, and give out when we're back in Spain that one night staring at the stars he tumbled overboard—How say you?

Man on the Look-out. Triana!

ROD. What's that? Our Lady forgive me! (*Trembling violently.*)

RAS. (*also alarmed.*) Nay—nay—'tis no ghost, thou white-livered fool!

PIN. Who calls?

MAN. Who calls? Why, I, to be sure! Triana, thine hour is come—

ROD. Oh, San Jago!—blessed San Jago! What is't?

MAN. 'Tis thy turn on the look out; I go to my night's rest. (*Descends, and exit.*)

ROD. Why—'tis but surly Herman Matheo after all! Now was not I a fool to think him a ghost? As if any ghost would venture so far from land—

RAS. Leaving a comfortable churchyard for the dreary sea! Our dead forefathers are no such fools, Triana.

PIN. But you must to your post—has not the great captain ordered it? Come, Gomez Rascon, we must leave him: we are not masters here.

RAS. An I have my will, ere the morrow dawns we shall be! Mutiny's the word!—Goodnight, Triana! (*Exit, R., with PINZON.*)

ROD. Goodnight—goodnight! (*Pause.*) Alone: all alone on the wide sea, at this ghostly hour of night. A man never feels so like a mouse as when he is left alone in the darkness, with no one to help should the devil—God bless him!—appear in horns and hoofs. (*Getting up into the bows.*) Look thou out for me, blessed San Jago,—marry, I wish he would, instead of lazily watching me from heaven, amid his never-ending hymns and psalms! (*Settles down and watches: towards the end of the ensuing dialogue falls asleep.*)

Enter DIEGO, L.

DIE. Strange that when all seems darkest, land not found,
The crew almost aroused to mutiny,
When hope would seem as far away as help,
My father's spirit rises, wild and happy,
Reckless of danger, into freer life
Than ever in my memory. With a hand
How firm and gentle, strong with tranquil power,
He curbs the ruffian rebels! Subtle, calm,
Immoveable by taunt, ill-will, defiance,
Like our brave ship that breasts the dark cold billows,

He holds his steady course—O, can it be
That I so wavering, spiritless, am his son?
I know not hope; feeble and weary ever
I long for rest, who have not worked to win it.
Dark water, troubled 'neath the pitiless stars,
Art not my home? If I could come to thee
Should I not be at peace?—Oh, childish fool,
Is it because a light girl frowns on thee
Thou dost despair?—Maria loves me not.
Can I not crush my love?

Enter COLUMBUS.

COL. There—my work's over.

DIE. A long day's work, my father, and hard.

COL. Ay, ay !

But not yet can I rest—my buoyant spirit
Leaps forth to hold communion with the waves
Its merry comrades, dancing through the dark,
Ere it seeks sleep. Sleep! While this brave time
holds

Of constant action, strife with man and ocean,
What have I to do with sleep, with sloth, with death?
They all are one—and I am all life now!
But thou must rest, my son.

DRE. A little while
Let us yet talk here in the quiet starlight.
I love to hear thy voice people the darkness
With brave thoughts, as at midnight an enchanter
Calls up the spirits of the heroic dead
To breathe their battle-music o'er him, worn

While my fond selfish thoughts roved far away!
Come, tell me all. Who is she, what her kinsfolk—?

DIE. Oh, they despise me—sneer at thee, my father;
And that I could not bear, and quarrelled so
With him, her proud sire,—

COL. They dare to despise thee!
Then fling them back their scorn in their own faces.—
What! In a year thy rank shall be to theirs,
Whoe'er of Spain's thick-headed lords they are,
As is a king's to mine! Thou, a discoverer
Of vast domains man's eye hath never seen,
Despised, contemned, a spurned suitor,—Never!
Be my brave son, Diego,—laugh at them.
Such maiden's love is all unworthy thine:
Bear with a careless brow the wound—ere long
Thou'lt cease to feel it.

DIE. By my soul I will!
I'm proud as they—nay, prouder: I have thee
To boast of, father,—How now? (COL. *is looking intently
across the sea, and staggers back a little with
outstretched arms.*) What is't? What see
you?

O speak!—O answer!—tell me—

COL. A light! A light!
Nay—nay—it cannot be—To the west! to the west!
Look, look, Diego!

DIE. I see nought—yet stay:
O God, it is! So far away, I scarce—

COL. But it is! A light!—Ho! the look-out there!
Who

Keeps it to-night?—Triana! Ho!

ROD. (*waking.*)

I'm here.

What would you?

COL.

Sleepy fool! See there! see there!

Look to the west—a light, I say!

DIE.

Just glimmering,

Scarce visible now.

ROD. (*coming down from the bours, slowly.*) Hey, hey!

What light is this

Ye speak of?

COL.

Fool! Look at it from thy post—

Above thou'lt see better than we below.

Quick, quick!

ROD. (*turning.*)

Oh, aye. (*Aside.*) Merciless wretch!

to rouse

A man from quiet comfortable watching

And make him keep both eyes open at once

In the raw night-air! (*He is now in his place again.*)

Well, where is it now?

COL. There—to the west. O quickly, sluggard, quickly!
'Sdeath, if the tardy fool have missed it—

ROD.

Nay.

I see no light, save some half-dozen stars

Thankfully dropping off to sleep, now dawn

Is coming to relieve them—

COL.

Lying dolt!

Go call thy fellows,—Diego, run thou too,—

O, 'twas a light—it rose and sunk, as in

Some fisher's boat, tossed by the waves—there, there,

Again it gleams!—Nay, gone again—Now, quick

Call up the crew—all hands—

DIE. Come on, Rodrigo. (*Runs off, L.*)

ROD. (*aside.*) 'Tis very hard, thus to be plagued o'
nights

And broken of one's rest—San Jago's sulky :
He'll help me not—the chance of honour's fled—
I'll go and tell them all to mutiny! (*Exit, R.*)

COL. (*stands for a moment silent, with clasped hands.*)
Can it be here?—can it be found at last?
O God, I thank thee: O God—I cannot pray,
I cannot think—the intense turbulent thoughts
Throng through my fevered brain tumultuously
And make a chaos—Spite of every difficulty,
Of every danger, I have won, I have won!
The mystery of ocean lies revealed:
The dream of so long years, so bitterly scoffed
By sages, is a dream no more—My glory
Is durable as the round world itself.
Spain will welcome me, and Beatrice—ah me,
Were I a boy, were I a boy again,
Freed from my vow that makes it sin to wed!

Enter RODRIGO, R.

ROD. They're coming, captain,—(*Aside.*) And in fine
grumbling mood;
Mutiny, mutiny's the word! Haha!

COL. Get thee back to thy post then—quick!—and
watch.

See! the gray dawn chills the dark bosom of night

And sends the stars in shivering.

ROD. I? Again?

COL. Thy watch is not yet o'er—and were it, still
Thou hast a certain debt of sleep to pay.

Up, sluggard, up!

ROD. (*aside, going up.*) That a Triana should
Be ordered by a beggarly Genoese
Thus like a kicked cur! Oh San Jago, aid me
To be revenged on him, and I will say
Thou still art a good fellow—for a saint.

COL. (*alone on the deck, turning towards the sea.*)
O Land, still sleeping in the womb of darkness,
What semblance wilt thou show to anxious watchers
When daylight brings thee to our eyes?—Most fruitful
The laden boughs afloat upon thine ocean
Have proved thee—and the balmy breezes bear
Faint fragrance from thine aromatic groves.
O flying Time, that art both night and day,
Now in thy golden garment clothe thyself
And show the treasures thou dost store for us,
Whether thy light reveal a wilderness,
A barren island of the Indian sea,
Or dawn on spicy groves and glittering fanes,
Thronged mart and gilded city, rich with rude
Barbaric splendour of the Orient!

Enter DIEGO.

DIE. Father, the crew comes, but they'll nought believe—

Enter PINZON, RAŒCON, BALLESTER, and others, R. and L.

Sailor. More signs, more signs! Nay, troth, I'm sick
of signs.

RAS. Rodrigo says he saw no light—

PIN. Nor any

Save our great captain and his duteous son.

BAL. Where away was the light, Captain?

COL. To the West!

RAS. Oh, ay, the West! We're sick of this your
West!

Let us turn eastward—

Sailors. Eastward! Homeward! Spain!

No more west! Homewards!

COL. How! When some few
hours' sail—

RAS. Nay, nay, we've had enough of sailing out;
Now we'll return!

PIN. Ay, ay! We're all agreed—
How say you, comrades? Home to dear old Spain,
Or forward—

RAS. To the devil?

Sailors. Home! We're agreed—
We're all for home!

BAL. Nay, not while I've a voice.
Forward, for one day longer at the least—
Stand by the Captain!

RAS. Matheo, gag that fool!

COL. How! (*Aside.*) Patience! patience! They've the
strength,

I must have cunning.—Wait ye then at least
Till the swift-rising dawn has cleared to day,
And ye can see—

PIN. For half an hour even
Thou'dst cling to the command—O poor ambition!

COL. (*aside.*) Oh God, Thou wilt not let the cup be
dashed

Even now from my lips? (*Aloud.*) Hear but one word,
My ancient messmates,—

PIN. No words! no more words!
Speak not, if thou wouldst live.—Thou at the helm,
Ye mariners, about at once,—to the East!

COL. What! (*Drawing.*)
By heaven, I slay the first that dares to stir
Against my order, in my fleet,—

RAS. Dost threaten?
Overboard with him—bear a hand here, ho!
(*All draw and advance on COLUMBUS, who stands C. with
drawn sword—BALLESTER and DIEGO draw to defend them-
selves, R. and L.*)

COL. Come, then! The mighty prize is won and lost,
Success is gained, all hope of glory gone!
Death has no terrors for me—

RAS. (*lunging at him.*) Nay? Then take it!

COL. (*parrying the thrust.*) Not from thy hand, slave!—
Farewell blessed dawn,

That comest too late—

PIN. Now kill them!

Sailors (*attacking them.*) Die!

ROD. (*above.*) Land ho!

COL. (*who has just thrown down PINZON.*) What?
Sailors (*casting away their swords, and falling on their
knees to COLUMBUS, who stands C., his foot on
PINZON'S neck.*) Master! Captain! Noble Colum-
bus! Pardon!

ROD. (*above.*) Land, two leagues to the west!—Captain,
I claim my reward!
(*Sailors kneeling to COLUMBUS—the sun risen.*)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Palace at Barcelona. The Hall of Audience, magnificently decorated. The throne of FERDINAND and ISABELLA, R., under a canopy of gold, and a smaller throne near it.*

Enter XIMENO, LUIS and RUIZ, R., hastily.

XIM. (*with a paper in his hand.*) Velvet, purple and green, black and crimson,—brocade of gold, silk of all colours, richest satin,—banners o'erwrought with strange devices,—everywhere jewels, costly arms, silver and gold,—what could heart of man wish more for welcome? How say you, brave Don Luis,—is not all in princely order for our great discoverer?

LUIS. Aye—right princely: thanks most of all to thine unwearied skill, my Breviesca.

XIM. Nay, nay, 'twas nought: a little experience, some taste perchance in suchlike matters,—no more: I pretend to nothing more. But you think the hall—

MARIA enters L., followed by TOLEDO.

MAR. Is worthy even of the great man for whose eyes 'tis designed.

LUIS. Say rather, he is even worthy of it; I can give no higher praise.

MAR. Don Luis' highest praise—to be worthy of three-piled velvet!

TOL. Haha! best say nought against the great Don Christopher, friend Luis: all our court-maidens have run mad about this doubler of the world. Beatrix, Maria, Leona,—nay, even our stately Queen herself, methinks!

XIM. (*aside.*) Now if any other but the mighty Toledo had said this it had wellnigh been treason! Lord, lord, what a thing it is to have a potent name and a long purse!

MAR. But you must not laugh at Columbus either, father; yourself allowed his greatness.

TOL. Aye, child: spite of his pride, 'tis a noble heart.

RUIZ. Nay, 'tis undoubted: proud, but very noble.

XIM. Noble, but very proud, indeed: what man denies it?

MAR. And now you make ready to receive him in state—'tis well. Are all the forms arranged—each weighty point? Here bow: here three steps backward—with much grave caution, lest you tumble down: here smile and blush (if you have blushes at command,) because the King coughs graciously—

XIM. But listen, Lady Maria: have you heard the honour that their Majesties design—unprecedented in the court of Spain—

MAR. No, no,—oh tell us, dear Breviesca!

LUIS and RUIZ. Ximeno, tell us. (*Gathering round him, R.*)

TOL. Ay, ay,—what is't? Whate'er it be, he deserves it.

XIM. See you yon throne? (*All turn to it; he goes on, explaining.*)

Enter BEATRIX, L.

BEAT. The ringing air repeats His name—the streets
Are filled with eager crowds to welcome Him.
Each window is the o'er-narrow frame of faces
Pressed down to catch of Him the earliest glimpse.
One thought, one name, is in all hearts to-day:
One thought, one name, one love o'erflows my soul.
He has gained a world, and all my world is his!
Columbus, monarch of the West thou hast won,
Come back, and take thy wreath of victory,
Come back, and claim the heart that yearns for thee!
O passionate love! I did not dream that earth
Held one whom I could pour out my whole being
In ecstasy before—that thou couldst sway me
Resistlessly, O King Love, tender Love!
When first I saw him, soft thy sweet voice whispered
“This is he! this is he!”—and like the swell of music
Nearer and nearer coming, rose the words
Ever more clear, more strong “’Tis he! ’tis he!”
—My master and my love,—no foolish boy,
But Man, grown grey and worn with the world’s strife,—
High head and noble soul, my spirit clings,
Prostrate, to thine, and cries “’Tis he! ’tis he!”

MAR. (*turning, sees BEAT.*) Ah! see the maiden whose
brave words half won

The heart of Isabella to Columbus.

I warrant you she's proud of her share in't.

Hail, half-discoverer of the western world!

Thou shouldst be happy now.

BEAT.

Am I not happy?

Doth not my pulse beat high and restless—are not

Mine eyes wild with the coming of the hero

Whose name outweighs all Spain? Happy! O heaven,

My heart is like the sea that leaps to clasp

In its wild joy the sky so far above!

(*Aside.*) So far, so far above!

MAR. (*aside to her.*)

Beatrix! Bethink you!

It is not meet a maiden thus should speak

In raptures of a stranger's welfare—nay,

Not were he old enough e'en for her sire.

Thou knowest how strict our Spanish rule is ever

For maidens' manners—and thou knowest well

How the warm blood of Spain such ruling needs.

BEAT. Nay, am I then immodest, thus to say

How prouder than of my whole life I am

That my poor voice has even so slightly helped

Columbus, lord of us all,—whose very name

In its immeasurable greatness thrills

My heart, my soul, that all contempt look down

Upon the pigmies who once strove to stay him—

Who now with glib words press to fawn on him!

(ISABELLA and FONSECA have entered up C.)

ISA. (*aside.*) This foolish girl! How her impetuous
tongue,

That once won hatred by its bitter coldness,

Now gives these grovellers power to injure her !
(*Aloud.*) Good morrow, lords and ladies. Beatrix,
Wert speaking of our hero ?

Fox. Of a truth,
Methought the Lady Beatrix was speaking
As though none of us had a right to claim him
As ours—our hero—save herself.

BEAT. And what right
Has my lord bishop, save that each delay,
Prevention by foul means or fair, that he
With his keen cunning, and the enormous mass
Of powerful Court stupidity he sways,
Could bring to bear—each insult, each annoyance,—
Was thrown in our discoverer's way, though brushed
Aside like cobwebs from a giant's path?

ISA. Nay, Beatrix, thou art hasty, like a girl :
We had not all thy instinct for the truth,—
Myself was tardy in this matter. Speak on't
No more ; thou wilt but wake old grievances
And profitless anger.

FON. Anger? Not of mine,
Your majesty may well be certain.

BEAT. Anger?

From him? Oh, never! Not the generous rage
That sometimes hastily moves a noble spirit!
Cold hate, like to the hideous baffled spider's
Whose webs are broken—that is all, your majesty:
Not anger—never anger!

ISA. Silence, child !
Dost with insulting words reproach the Church,

And in our presence ?

BEAT. Not the Church—the churchman.

ISA. Am I no longer Queen ? I bid thee, silence !
What ! are our young court-maidens grown so proud
They can disregard our word ?—I pray your Grace
Nowise to heed this foolish girl's hot anger.
'Twill pass—

FON. Oh speak not of it : it is but
The fever that this glorious day must breed
In a young heart.—To us who know the cause
'Tis matter for a kindly smile—no more.

TOL. (*aside.*) Now curse his sly insinuating tongue !
—Though Heaven forgive me that I curse Its minister.
Like fire the rumour 'll spread that Beatrix,
Our pretty one, my child's sweet playmate Beatrix,
Is mad for love of this gray Genoese—
Whereas she's nothing but a heedless baby
That needs must crow aloud when it admires.

XIM. (*aside.*) One who could turn the topic now should
do

A kindly act would be remembered well :
Yet how without offending either speak
Of him, the envied hero ?—May it please,
The hall is now made ready to receive him
The great discoverer—that is, the Genoese,—
That is, in a word, Columbus. Might I show
Your majesty—

ISA. We'll look at it alone.
Beatrix, stay thou.

XIM. (*aside to LUIS.*) Hm ! the hint is plain.

We are to go. I'll try and find Columbus,
And drill him to his part in the day's pageant :
These great men ever are such awkward boors !

(*Exit, R.*)

Luis. What else could one expect ?

Ruiz. Nought ! (*Exeunt, R.*)

MAR. (*going, with TOLEDO.*) Still, my father,
You will allow Don Christopher is great—
Oh very, very, very great !

TOL. 'Tis true.

MAR. And—he is Diego's father.

TOL. (*tapping her cheek.*) Silly girl ! (*Exeunt, L.*)

FON. (*aside.*) They steal off like a flock of frightened
sheep :

And I, armed with the Church's power, must follow
A sheep among them !—

Your majesty has no further need of me ?

ISA. None, at this moment. I will not detain you
Longer from your high duties, good Fonseca.

FON. (*aside.*) In two words—"Leave me." Yes : I am
a slave. (*Exit.*)

ISA. (*advancing to BEAT.*) Can it be I, my Beatrice,
that have raised

These harsh unloving fancies in your heart,
Only by saving with a sharp rebuke
And public triumph for the Bishop's pride
My foolish girl from his revenge?—Come, come,
Be not so hasty, daughter of my love :
Check that wild tongue as other maidens use :
Utter not all the thoughts you think you think—

Believe me, these wild children's raptures seem
Too sad for smiles and yet not grave at all
To us whom life has made more slow of movement
Alike in spirit and body.—I have been
A girl, even as you are : and I dreamt
Wild dreams, whose beauty almost pains me now.
I felt a fettered eagle, and would fly
Up to the sun—thank heaven, my chains were strong.
They kept me down to earth, from scorching death,
From bruised and shameful fall,—and now I think
My life, though bound in God's kind leading-strings,
Has not been useless : now I think I see
A way to heaven—far above the sun
That dazzled my young eyes—longer, it may be,
But plain and sure, that shortens every day :
I see His eyes, that wept for such as I,—
His patient hands reach to me, Beatrix,—
Child, learn His lesson, and endure in peace. (*Exit R.*)

BEAT. Aye—child. That is the name. I must not
look

For meaning in my nurse's words, but only
“Do this” — “do that” —because she says 'tis right.
“Cry not—when you are old as I you'll know
There is no need to cry, to strive for heaven
In noble ways, with daring upward flight :
Because a steady walk—the common course
Of dull not-doing-wrong—will bring you there.”
God's leading-strings, these earthly bonds are ?—Nay,
But men's hard fetters—good, I never doubt,
For their foul narrow souls, that dream of love

As—pah! they are right: no maid should think of it.
But we, who know the angel true love is,
Shall we be bound by the coarse bonds they need?
Shall never a noble maid to noble man
Dare to say—aye, in open words, if need be,—
“I love thee: I am thine, as thou I know
Art mine—heart, body, soul: take me—I trust thee.”
Aye, hero: thou and I alike o’erleap
The boundaries of the world of petty men,
And wander where we will—O my soul’s king
Together, shall it not be—hand in hand,
Past Death’s narrow river, through Eternity! (*Goes off
slowly, R.*)

Enter MARIA, L.

MAR. Beatrix!—Nay, she hears me not: deep, deep
In day-dream, that will scarcely last a day.
So, Beatrix, has your love-search come to this—
A man whose mid summer of life is past:
Who thinks you—if he thinks of you at all—
Sweet, maybe, as a daughter, pretty child!
For me, his son! I saw him pass the gateway
But now—his step seemed firmer, and his face
Bronzed, manly,—hither he comes. O how to meet
him?
I’d fain begin with loving words—but that
The world would call unmaidenly. Ah me,
I must needs tease him once again, poor boy!
Only a little more, dear old Diego! (*Turns away.*)

Enter DIEGO, *L.*

DIEGO. (*half aside.*) Maria! Is't not? (*Aside.*) O now
help me, Pride!

Unless—ah, heaven grant thou be not needed!
(*With a low bow.*) Donna Maria, your most humble
servant.

MAR. Don Diego Columbus! Home again!
And not much larger than when he set forth!

DIE. (*aside.*) Nay, petulant as ever. Not a glance
Of joy to see me safe returned. I am still
As far beneath her as of old. O proud
Nobles of Spain! What alone deem ye noble?
The knowledge that your great-great-grandfather
Was—maybe hired-assassin to a king!

MAR. (*aside.*) Why speaks he not?—and he looks
stern and sad!
—Still dreaming, sir? Has not a new world waked you
From monkish reveries?

DIE. Yes: I dream no longer.
There have I found what once I thought were here:
Men—women even—who but use their speech
To show their thoughts—'tis a strange race, in faith!
Their tongue knows no such word as pedigree,—
With them, a stranger is no helpless outcast,—
And, worst of all, kindlier they use a man
In trouble than in triumph!

MAR. And there are
None like to these in Spain?

DIE. I have found none.

Here, is a man honoured because he towers
O'er us on stilts three centuries old: despised
If he have raised himself—despised, by all!

MAR. (*aside.*) O could I say that *I* would not despise
him!

But asked in that tone—Never!

DIE. You'd not deny it?

MAR. I cannot say I like a man the less
Because his ancestors were great: the more
Because his grand-sire—if by chance he had one—
Crouched 'neath the feet of mine, a peasant slave!

DIE. Not though his great heart breaks those heavy
fettters?

MAR. I love a great heart all the more if clad
In the fine grace of long nobility.

DIE. A low bow ranks before a self-raised spirit.

MAR. Your self-raised man bows to none—

DIE. Save his sovereign.

True!

MAR. Methinks one day he'll scarce bow to him.

DIE. Aye, you would paint us rebels, insolent boors,—
Us, for my father raised him from the lowest
To far above these silken courtiers,—us,
Clods, doubtless, seamen rough, who will not cringe
Even for hope of power, pleasure, wealth,
Even to win a noble maiden's heart,
Even, O God, to save our own from breaking!

(*Rushes out, L.*)

MAR. Diego!—He is gone! I have lost him—lost him!
O silly child—what hast thou done, poor child?

I laughed—but ah, could he not see I loved him?
When my eyes looked up into his brave eyes—
So deep and true they are, so strong and manly
He has grown—O he is blind, he cares not for me,
Or he would see I love him, love him, love him!
Who comes?—They shall not see me weep. (*Dashing
away the tears.*) There!

Enter LUIS, RODRIGO DE TRIANA, and RUIZ.

LUIS.

Aye?

ROD. 'Tis true, sir,—a whole tribe of one-eyed men:
Men with dogs' heads—surly, but very honest:
Mermaids—who are by no means beautiful:
And mortal men who all day blow unharmed
Thick smoke-clouds from their mouths!

RUIZ.

Nay, Don Rodrigo!

ROD. Oh, I have done't myself for hours together.
'Tis but to light a harmless Indian weed
And fan its flame with Nature's bellows!

LUIS.

Strange!

ROD. Stranger than all, an isle of Amazons—
A nation, sir, of women only.

LUIS.

Charming!

RUIZ. Methinks, a nation that would soon die out.

ROD. Their husbands dwelt upon another island
Twenty miles off.

MAR.

Poor husbands! But I've heard
Young Don Diego speak a stranger thing.
Met you, sir, anywhere upon your travels,
A country where they always tell the truth?

Silent?—Then learn, sir, such a land is Spain!

(Bowing to him—all laugh.)

O pardon!—'tis but my light heart! *(Going, aside.)*

Diego! *(Exit.)*

ROD. Haha! A merry maiden.

LUIS. And 'twas you
That found this wondrous western shore?

ROD. 'Twas I!
Just before dawn one Friday. All the crew
With long delay were grown rebellious—faith!
Another hour and they'd turned back: but give me
This hour, says I, and I will show you land!
I clambered up the giddy mast.—Five minutes,
And two leagues to the west I spied—

(COLUMBUS, in a long mantle, and XIMENO, enter at back.)

Columbus! *(Runs off quickly.)*

COL. *(coming down, and laying his hand on LUIS' shoulder.*

—Laughingly.)

Well, sir, so we succeeded after all,
Spite of your doleful prophecies!

LUIS. Oh—true.
That is,—you went there—

COL. And came back again.
Both of which feats were once pronounced impossible.

RUIZ. Nay, nay: impossible is scarce the word.
Dangerous, doubtless.

XIM. Truly, dangerous.
And yet—look ye, Señor Columbus: not
I' the spirit of detraction would I speak—
But think you, truly, had you not discovered

These western Indies—had you not, I say,
Chanced to be first—there are no other men
Capable of the emprise?

COL. (*aside.*) I will speak
To them in parable.—Bring me here an egg.

LUIS. An egg?

RUIZ. But wherefore——

XIM. Marry, would you let
The western world's discoverer want an egg
Because you fathom not his mind's deep reasons?
(*Aside, going.*) He is a great man—but he's very mad!
(*Exit.*)

LUIS (*aside to RUIZ, —watching COL.*) He thinks!

RUIZ (*to him.*) Nay, so he does!

LUIS (*to him.*) A marvellous man!

Thinking, you see,—thinking, while others—

RUIZ (*to him.*) Talk!

Re-enter XIMENO, carrying a small light table, with six eggs.

XIM. Eggs, mighty admiral.

COL. O see his bounty.

I asked but for an egg, he brings me six!

(*Aside.*) A year ago, he'd not have given one.

—Now, gallant nobles of the Court of Spain,—

And you, sir, who are not exactly noble,—

I pray you, cause this egg to stand on end

Alone and unsupported on the table.

XIM. (*taking an egg.*) Marvellous!

RUIZ (*taking one.*) Nay, impossible!

LUIS (*taking one.*) 'Twould need

Witchcraft, methinks,

XIM. There!—no. It can't be done.

LUIS. Hopeless! There's no way!

RUIZ. None at all!

COL. (*striking the egg.*) 'Tis done!

And by no miracle.

LUIS. Haha! Of course!

XIM. Absurdly simple—when you know the way.

COL. Even so, my lords, was our discovery.

What is it now? A voyage of two months:
Steer ever to the west—what could be simpler?
What was it then? To launch into infinitude—
Without a guide but faith, a help but hope:
Like children in the darkness, peering onward
Still ignorant what monsters we might meet,
Scarce knowing if that darkness had an end.
Trust me, good friends, that voyage tried our hearts.

LUIS. But Spanish hearts are brave!

COL. And Genoese?

—Pardon me, I must leave you now, lords. Soon
My men pass in procession through the city,
And I must join them.

XIM. I have duty, too.

Farewell, Columbus. (*Aside to LUIS and RUIZ.*) And to
think that we

Were that great man's first patrons! Wonderful!

(*They go out, arm in arm, R.*)

COL. Curs! how their very souls adore success!

—This is mine hour of triumph: now life flows
At fullest,—swift the lordly stream sweeps on
Beneath warm summer breezes, in its bosom

Bearing all wealth and pomp of honour: all
I have gained—save that whereof methought desire
Long years ago was dead. Could I once more
Meet that brave girl!—Her dark glance clings to me.
Can it be that I love—I, who am old,
I, who am bound by a relentless vow!
Who is this?—Beatrix!

Enter BEATRIX, *R.*

BEAT. (*aside.*) Yes—he is here!

COL. Noble lady, I am home returned my helper
In the great work to thank—

BEAT. (*aside.*) His helper! I!

Col. My thanks must almost be farewell. Brief stay
We make here: then away! again to the West.

BEAT. Away so soon?—but wherefore?

COL. To win gold:
Gold, from the sand of countless Indian streams.

BEAT. Gold ?

COL. AYE. Hast thou not heard my life's great aim?
To equip a Christian army that shall wrest
From the accurst Mahometans Jerusalem.—
We shall need gold!

BEAT. Still onward? What men deem
A lifetime's work scarce ended, dost begin
Untired another as great?

COL. Oh greater, higher !
Most glorious of all works—to redeem
The Crown of the world !

BEAT. Art thou a man as others?

Know'st thou no human weakness?

COL. Ah me, yes!

Folly and madness sometimes. I have wished
To give up all, might I but be—Thou'lt smile
To hear 't—a boy: a beardless, brainless boy!

BEAT. Thou! A great man who can dare all, win
all,—

A boy, to lose the fame, the power and love
Thou hast won!

COL. Aye—to win sweeter love.

BEAT. (*aside.*) What means he?
Are my mad dreams no dream?—A maiden's love,
Columbus, wouldst thou stoop to gain?

COL. I love—
If thou wilt have me tell it—I love, indeed,
Methinks the only woman in the world
To love whom no most lofty soul of men
Need stoop,—nay rather unto whose divinity,
As to God's heaven, he must raise his eyes.

BEAT. (*aside.*) Ah no, it cannot be! This is some
woman
Who has lived, worked: not dreamed—not dreamed
as I!

My dream is o'er.—(*Aloud.*) Prithee, tell me her name.
I will tell no one: I would pray for her,
That is all—pray for her Columbus loves.

COL. (*aside.*) What harm to tell her? She will pity
me.

'Twere sweet to win a smile—a tear—from Beatrix.

BEAT. Her name—wilt thou not tell me?

COL. (*after a pause.*) —It is thine.

BEAT. *Thou lovest me?*

COL. (*bowing his head in his hands.*) O my vow,
my vow!

—Lady, I have vowed that till the Holy City
Be won, never will I wed wife, nor rest
In home at ease.

BEAT. But thou lovest me?

COL. I love thee.—

O farewell, Beatrix, farewell, farewell! (*Going.*)

BEAT. Thou lovest me! Thou—Columbus! O my King,
Wilt thou not hear my love, my adoration?
Once I was proud—now I am very humble.
O what am I, to pray to be thy wife,
Thy mate, thy equal,—thine, Columbus! Nay,
Thy love is all I ask—thy love is mine!

(*Sinking down at his knees.*)

COL. Rise, Beatrix, rise!—let me look up to thee!
Let not love lower those brave eyes—too noble,
Too pure and proud for aught but sovereignty.

BEAT. Is not this highest love, when the spirit clings,
Poor suppliant, at the feet,—trembling—a child?
So we love God: so love I thee—my lord!

COL. (*lifting her.*) But rise, dear child, dear girl—
(*Suddenly clasping her to his breast.*) O thou art mine!
Sweet, thou art mine—and I am thine for ever,
Thy knight, to do thy will,—to live for thee,
To die for thee with joy! I am unworthy,
Thou art above me, but thou art mine—mine wholly!
O noble brow, sweet child's mouth, darling heart,—

Child, angel, woman,—all of thee is mine.
Thy grace, thy love, thy life, thy truth and trust,
Thy purity, thy passion,—

BEAT. (*in his arms.*) All, all, all!

My life is in thy hand—cast it away,
Or wear it as the jewel of thy crown :
So thy voice speaks my fate, I will not murmur.
I am happy, happy, happy,—art not thou,
Dear heart ?

COL. I cannot speak my joy in words,
It is too great.

BEAT. But yet thy lips can tell it ! (*Kissing him.*)
(*Flourish of trumpets without.*)

COL. The trumpets ! Beatrix, I must away—
At once, at once,—they wait for me.

BEAT. So soon !
But thou wilt come to me again ? (*Pause.*)

COL. I know not.
O damnèd vow !—What can I do ?—Beatrix—

BEAT. Oh, do not leave me ! Take me, only take me,—
To be thy handmaiden, to look on thee
Each day—to serve thee—I, that was proud Beatrix !

COL. Thou know'st how cruel is the world's foul heart :
I dare not bid thee risk its scorn—'twere villainy
Ever to let its peering eyes espy
Aught that its filthy tongue could misconstrue.

BEAT. So I love thee, what is the world to me ?
And so thou lovest me, what is life or death ?
Columbus, let me follow thee ! My love,
Hast thou a moment showed me happiness

To make all after dark?—Thou shalt not go
Till once more thou hast said—

COL. I love thee, Beatrix!
I cannot yield thee up—mine, mine for ever!

(Kisses her, and rushes out, L.)

BEAT. It is enough—farewell! *(Pause.)*

What is this? Have I dreamed?
He was here but now—was he not? Beatrix—
Is it the same world?—Passionate spirit of his love
How thy broad river flowed around my soul!
Girl, art not happy now?—O God, was it real—
Did we speak those words—oh yes! yes! yes!
Thou silly heart, his arm enfolded thee!
Didst thou not leap to meet it?—Frightened bird,
In thine own nest that fluttered!—Loves me—loves me!
O, I am proud,—so proud,—how I tremble!

Enter FONSECA, L.

FON. Good!
Don Christopher Columbus, Admiral
Of the High Seas, Viceroy of Lands in the West
Discovered by His Loftiness, does not deem
Worthy his notice your poor Spanish bishop!
—Aye, Lady Beatrix, past me rushed your friend
Without a word, a glance of courtesy—
What say you to this Genoese civility?

BEAT. What say you for proud Spain's hypocrisy,
That smiles and hates, that bows and slyly stabs?
You were Columbus' enemy—unprovoked
But unrelenting: he has triumphed o'er you—

What need for him to fawn upon the serpent
That writhes beneath his heel?

FON. (*aside.*) Is the girl mad?
She braves me—she insults me to my face!
Mad or not mad, Fonseca's enemies
Go not unpunished.—As you say, the man
Did well—succeeded: a good sailor, doubtless.

(XIMENO, LUIS and RUIZ re-enter, R.)

No more—and of a boundless arrogance.

XIM. Arrogant! O heaven!

LUIS. The admiral?

RUIZ. Unbearable!

BEAT. Ye petty backbiters, who walk beneath him
As peasants staring earthward by a mountain
That tops the clouds, nor dream but your dull eyes
O'ergaze the summit of his greatness,—Ye,
Who fawn upon him present, have ye not
Grace to be silent now? At least remember
You are not now among your fellows only:
One here can reverence Columbus.

FON. True.

Our young Court nobles stand but little chance
With Lady Beatrix now, I fear.

BEAT. What are they—
What are these silken boys to him?

XIM. Despite
His grey hairs—true, what are they?

BEAT. Must a maiden
Still love a smooth-faced courtier, on whose brow,
Whose sweetly curling locks, whose downy cheek,

Grey Care and cruel Time have left no trace?

FON. I' faith, a little more, and I believe
One maid would love this weatherbeaten seaman!

BEAT. And why not, reverend father of the Church?
Say that I did—say that I do—what then?

FON. (*to XIMENO and others.*) Hush! tell not this at
court—it were not well.

We are no scandalmongers—let's away.

BEAT. Think you I am ashamed of the avowal?
Nay, spread it where you will—let all men know
'Tis not alone the comeliness of youth
Nor outward beauty of a brainless face
Can win a woman's heart. What! do ye dare me
To show the holy secret of my love?
In the full glory of the sun that lights
The masters of the world, can be no privacy—
Columbus' life and love are History!
(*Aside.*) What have I said—mad girl, what have I said?
(*Trumpets heard, off R.*)

XIM. Their Majesties!—To your places, everyone!
(*They go up. BEATRIX remains, motionless, down*
L. Trumpets. FERDINAND and ISABELLA enter,
attended by pages, courtiers, MARIA, TOLEDO, &c.
R. FERDINAND and ISABELLA ascend throne.)

FER. Comes yet the admiral?

XIM. Immediately,

Your Majesty: I marvel that ere this
He is not here.—Ha! are not those his trumpets?

(*A flourish of trumpets. Then enter, with martial music,*
a guard of trumpeters and soldiers: then In-

dians, painted and tattooed, and profusely decorated with golden ornaments: then several of COLUMBUS's crew, followed by DIEGO; and last COLUMBUS, in a rich scarlet dress. As he approaches them, the sovereigns rise, bowing.)

FER. Welcome, Columbus!

ISA. Welcome, noble friend!

Glory of Spain, receive thy nation's gratitude!

COL. At my most gracious sovereigns' feet I kneel
And beg to kiss—(*Kneeling, and offering to take ISABELLA's hand.*)

ISA. (*withdrawing it.*) No: such a vassalage
Thou art too high to offer, noble brother.

COL. Rather your Majesty's most lowly subject:
Unworthy even this honour. (*Kisses her hand.*)

FER. Rise, Columbus:
Rise now, and be thou seated in our presence
As equal.

BEAT. (*aside.*) This—to my love!

XIM. (*aside to LUIS.*) There! I told you!
Unrivalled honour, ne'er before bestowed
On subject!

COL. To my sovereign's gracious will
No thanks of mine can answer. (*Sits.*)

FER. Noble Admiral,
More than may ever be repaid we owe thee—

COL. Ah no, your Majesty. Give not to me
The awful gratitude, the thanks and praise,
Due to no man. Unto that Providence
Which on the troublous sea let no cross wind

Retard our outward voyage, but with aids
Mystic and manifold forever helped us—
(*Rising.*) Now do I swear, that ere seven years be past
A noble army will I furnish forth
To win again the City of the Lord
From the Infidel.—This with the countless treasures
Of the West we well may do. From that rich land
Fairer than Andalusia in the spring,
More fertile than the sea-girt Hesperids,
Spain's nobles shall win gold, Spain's ladies pearls,
And her brave churchmen sweet souls numberless
From Satan to the bosom of the Lord!

ISA. (*sinking upon her knees.*) O thank we Heaven who
hath given us this!

COL. (*half aside.*) Who hath given me all!

BEAT. All—all!

(*All sink upon their knees. The Choir chants Te Deum
Laudamus, as drop falls.*)

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Cadiz. The port.*

Enter XIMENO, richly dressed, and evidently very prosperous.

XIM. In chains! Columbus chained—brought back a
prisoner
From the New World he found seven years ago!
Chains! Haha! 'Tis a sweet revenge!—My lord,
I think ere your last voyage—was it not?—
You thrashed me! By Fonseca's wise command
I was to spare no insult, no abuse,
Our Genoese to harass: and i' faith
E'en to the water's edge I followed him
With gibe and sneer—until the burly ruffian
Turned, struck me to the ground, and spurned at me
With his accursèd foot! Kicked like a dog
I vowed revenge—and what revenge is here!
The conqueror chained—hauled like a felon home—

Enter FONSECA.

FON. Is't true, this glorious news?

XIM. True, every word!

FON. Time, what a triumph hast thou brought us,—us,
Once foiled and shamed by this adventurer !
In seven short years has his stupendous wonder
Of a New World grown stale, familiar,—nought.
He has taught other mariners, who name not
For fresh discoveries such haughty terms :
So hath the King no longer need of him.

XIM. (*aside.*) And Ferdinand is not one to waste his
gold,
Nor keep old servants when the new are cheaper !

FON. Well has brave Bobadilla done his work.
Such charges of misgovernment he sends
From ruined and rebellious Hispaniola
Against our whilome Viceroy, that methinks
Columbus' name is soiled and sunk for ever !

XIM. Even the Queen's heart almost turned against
him—

FON. His lady-love an outcast—starved, mayhap,
By this time is the haughty Beatrix !

XIM. His son a powerless nobody, who watches
His father's cause at home, forsooth,—disdained
By the fair maid he dares no longer woo !

FON. And he in chains ! O to those chains' sweet
music
I could dance for joy !

XIM. And I—whom once he kicked !

FON. Spread not this news abroad, though. Once the
mob
Held him in honour—and a mob is obstinate :
They might recall—To-day the vessel comes,

Is't not? I must to Ferdinand at once! (*Exit.*)

XIM. He's a good hater, is the Bishop, truly.
Some seven years ago that girl defied him,—
Now she is ruined, dead for aught we know,
And still he hates her. 'Tis a man of principle.
Let's hope he'll prove as constant to his friends.

Enter Two Citizens and a Fisherman, in conversation, R.

Fisherman. But I say 'tis a shame: I've ne'er upheld
Columbus against these many charges brought of late—

1st Cit. Myself, I'd almost forgotten the man.

Fisher. 'Troth, so had I: Gratitude's memory was
never over long,—but such a deed as this—

XIM. (*joining them.*) They say the admiral was wont to
be o'er proud and overbearing, though.

1st Cit. And 'tis certain he misruled Hispaniola woe-
fully,—so rich a land in rebellion, costing every year
more money and men, returning scarce a penny,—

Fisher. And what of that? Remember what he's
done for Spain—for us. Reprove him, if you will,—nay
if he be indeed unfit for such an office, give him some
other: but Columbus in irons,—Columbus, who found
for us—

Enter BALLESTER (looking much older,) and Citizen.

BAL. I'll not believe it! 'Tis not true! Why, man,
the very thought is treason—our Queen could never do it!

XIM. Is this another on fire for our Genoese Admiral?

BAL. Ay, is it, sneer who will! Who art thou, whose
blood boils not to hear of such injustice? A whining

landsman—one of those who wellnigh lost us for ever the New World, sent to some other land our noble Christopher,—

1st *Cit.* By heaven, now I think of it, noble he was! —“The Noble Christopher”: I gave my shop that sign once, and many a pipe of wine have I sold by but saying the Discoverer had drank of it—as freely he might have, had he come that way!—And thou hast served under Columbus?

BAL. I thank Heaven that I have: and now gladly would I lay down my life for him—but what good were that?

XIM. (*aside.*) I like not the look of things—I’ll gently move away. (*Steals off.*)

Enter several Citizens, R. and L.

Citizen. Then this news is—

BAL. Nay—nay—nay! I’ll ne’er believe it! And yet—my coward heart whispers Yes. (*They talk apart, up stage: more fishers, citizens, &c., gradually enter.*)

Enter BEATRIX, R., haggard and meanly dressed.

BEAT. (*coming down.*) O that my voice were fire—that I might wake

A flame within the heart of each that heard me!
All Spain should rise, and shrieking for redress
Shake with an outraged nation’s voice the throne.
Startled would cautious Ferdinand give way:
Brave Isabella’s sleeping soul would wake

To duty and to pity : fierce Fonseca—
O we would tear him limb from limb ! The tigress
Loving her own is pitiless to others,
But not less pitiless a woman's heart
A-fire for vengeance, nor a people proud
Once stung with bitter sense of injury !
Columbus !—Shall all gratitude be dead ?
What is it, if he hath no more to give us—
No newer worlds, no gold, ah me no love ?
Still for the wealth once given we love him poor :
Silent, I love him yet for old love-words—
Help, Heaven, that I may raise the world to aid
him !

Fisher. (to BALLESTER, coming down.) All true : but
what's to be done ? Against the King,
The Bishop,—aye, and the Queen even,—what are we ?

BEAT. Have I found any who have hearts to hear ?
True men of Spain ! would ye set free Columbus ?

BAL. Aye, would we : but we cannot.

BEAT. Cannot ! Think—
A moment think what he has done for ye,
And the wing'd eagle-thoughts themselves will do it—
Aye, turn to staves and swords, and from Might wrest
For once the Right, by Right's own greatest Might !

Citizen. Nay, nay ; no swords and staves : 'twere
mutiny.

BEAT. Then let us mutiny against the Wrong !
Ye all are men, and I am one poor woman
Who have not strength nor health nor wealth to help
me,

Yet if ye follow I will lead you on
Where we may gain redress for him—O men,
O Spanish hearts! what pride does not his name
Awaken,—who but he has won for you
Your station in the forefront of the World,
Your empire over worlds till now unknown?
Why, you are sailors, traders, merchantmen,
And will you tell me that a hundred times
Meeting in commerce or in voyage others,
English and French and Portuguese, aflame
To seek new shores, to brave untravelled seas,
Ye have not inly laughed, looked down on them,
With “Aha! ye but follow in our tracks!
Vasquez di Gama, Cabral and Cabot,
With wealth of wide Brazil and Labrador,
What had ye won had Spain not led the way?”

All. O true—most true!

Fisher. But what would you we did now?

BEAT. What? To the palace with me—there upraise
With stormy clamour of indignant souls
That name it fired you all to think of once,
That name, if dimmed, yet ne’er to be forgot,
That name that bears the mastery of the world—
Columbus! Ho! Columbus is in chains!
In fetters, like a felon, like a slave!
Columbus chained, who to Castile and Leon
Gave a New World,—Freedom at once for him
Or death for you or us!”—Who dares to fear
When Spanish honour is at stake?—Away!
Follow me all! Columbus!

All.

Ho! Columbus!

On to the palace!

BAL.

This is no work for women.

Brave lady, stay you here: your work is done,—

Leave now the rest to me.—Columbus! Ho!

(*All rush out R. shouting "Columbus! To the palace!"*)

BEATRIX follows them nearly off, then stands watching them.)

BEAT. Brave hearts! brave hearts! I knew they would be true!

It is not yet too late—O have I saved him,
Perhaps from shameful death,—for what but death
Could such a vile dishonour mean? Columbus!
Might not this service win for me again
Thine old dear love—or have I never lost it?
Yet, if thou lovest me, why thy restless gloom,
Thy stern brow, that yet never seemed unkind,
When we were last together?—why since then
Unbroken silence, worse than harshest words?
Alas! how sweet thy coldest voice were now
To me, who am in all the world alone!

Enter MARIA, L.

MAR. Beatrix! We meet again—and thus? What means this?

Methought but now I saw an angry woman
Harangue a rude mob, who with shouts and curses
Then rushed along the peaceful streets—but never
Dreamt I 'twas thou, the sister I had loved!
O Beatrix, in the years we have not met

What hast thou fallen to—thou, fallen indeed!

(*BEATRIX stands with clasped hands, motionless.*)

BEAT. (*murmuring.*) Maria—Maria—Once more.

(*Suddenly throws herself in an agony of tears at her feet.*)

Maria! Maria!

Nigh seven years have I kept me from thy path;

I have been proud—I would not stoop to beg

For the old love—O say it is not dead!

Maria! Maria! Maria!

MAR.

Nay, what love,

What friendship can there be between us now?

Thou, of the noblest blood of Cordova,

Didst stoop to love this mad adventurer,

Who, bound forsooth by some prodigious vow,

Could not e'en make thee wife!—who now they say

No longer cares for thee—

BEAT. (*aside, starting up.*) "They say"! 'Tis known—
'Tis true, then!—But Maria, hast heard? They bring
him

In chains, a prisoner, home!

MAR.

Would they had chained him

In a lifelong prison e'er he first met thee!

BEAT. Dare not to wish it! 'Tis my heart's first
pride

I was the one love of Columbus' life!

What if his love be dead? Still, still I gained it!

Columbus deemed me worthy to be loved!

My love, my life are his for aye—what right

Have I, hast thou, has anyone, to question

What with his own he does?—Maria, farewell.

I thought we ne'er should meet on earth again :
I knew there was a great gulf fixed between us :
But never in my darkest hour I dreamed
Maria's heart was wholly dead to me,
Maria had forgotten her old playmate !

(Exit, R.)

MAR. *(after a pause.)* Why have I wounded thus the
dearest heart

That ever beat on earth ? Do I not still,
In spite of all, adore and reverence
My noble Beatrix ? O coward soul
That dares not brave the world and cling to her—
That stabs the tender bosom of thy love
So sorely needing kindness, but, if stained,
If tarnished, purer still a million times,
More bright, more brave, more heavenlike, more loving
In God's true eyes than thine own earthly spirit !
Cold cruel world, that my great sister hated
And braved too much, I hate thee—but I fear thee !
Diego, Beatrix, thou hast torn from me :
I hate thee—and I hate myself the more !

Enter DIEGO, L.

DIEGO *(aside.)* My lost love—I'll turn back ; she does
not see me.

MAR. Stay, Don Diego ! Hast thou heard the news ?

DIE. I have heard no good tidings.

MAR. Nor the worst.

They bring thy father home.

DIEGO. I thought it.

MAR.

Aye.

But—'tis in irons : chained.

DIE.

Chained ?—Chains, Maria ?

My father ! O God's curse upon them !—Pardon,

I know not what I say—What can I do ?

The King—ah no ! Ferdinand never loved him,—

The Queen's heart turned by lying slanderers,—

No hope ! No hope ! Great heaven !

MAR.

Would I could help you !

DIE. And can you not ? Maria, for myself

I would not stoop to ask a boon of any

Who held me not their equal,—but for Him

What would I not do ? (*Kneeling.*) Lady, on my knees

I ask it—use your influence with your father :

Toledo still is powerful at court.

O despise me—think what you will of me—

But aid my father ! Once I sought your love :

Now had I hopes I'd give them all, to win—

Alas ! you think me an ungallant pleader !

MAR. No, Don Diego, you have learnt to woo.

Never true woman's heart saw love and faith,

Self-sacrifice, and self-abasement noble,

But yearned to crown them. What my voice is worth

Is yours—your father's.

DIE.

My heart's truest thanks

That you can pity him !

MAR.

'Tis not all pity.

One may pity those one does not love.

DIE.

You love him,

Columbus—my father ?

MAR. I love your father, and I love Columbus,
Diego. (*Aside.*) Diego Columbus!—would he guess
At my too easy riddle!

DIE.

Oh, then aid him!

At once—at once!

MAR. (*aside.*)

Dare I but tell my love!

DIE. Wilt not?

MAR. (*aside.*) I lost him seven years ago

By being—over maidenly. (*A loud.*) Diego.

DIE. Maria?

MAR. What was it—that you said just now—of
hopes?

DIE. That they were dead.

MAR. Why are they dead, Diego?

DIE. Your disdain killed them.

MAR.

Foolish little hopes!

Killed—by a mock disdain.

DIE.

But did you not

Despise me then?

MAR.

Who am I, to despise

The son of the greatest man in the whole world!

(*Aside.*) Ha! Do I not know how to woo him?

DIE.

Maria!

You think him so?—Forgive me if I wake

Old troubles, that I thought asleep for ever—

Darling Maria, could you ever love me?

MAR. (*after a pause.*) I think — I think — ah me!

I think I could!

DIE. My love! (*Embracing her.*) At last, after so many
years!

MAR. So many weary years!—but speak not of them :
It makes me feel so very very old !

DIE. Nay, love—But we forget,—we must seek thy
father ;

Mine is in chains : and till those chains be loosed
Sorrow still gnaws the heart of all our joy. (*Exeunt, R.*)

Enter ALONZO DE VILLEJO, as if from ship.

VILLEJO. Ay, hither, if it must be. This way, your
excellency.—Would he but let me take those fetters off!
—Here, señor.

Enter COLUMBUS, chained.

COL. Villejo, whither are you taking me ?

VIL. To their majesties, señor.

COL. To the King and Queen !

Villejo, is't the truth you tell me now ?

VIL. Yea, by your Excellency's life, 'tis true !

COL. Now have I hope : till now, all hope was dead !

VIL. Your excellency—I've one word to say :

Let me take off those chains. Nought do I fear

Yon Bobadilla, nor my lord Fonseca ;

And were they twenty times as powerful

I'd risk it, for it galls my heart to see you—

Let me but take them off ! (*Kneeling to do so.*)

COL. No, friend. Their majesties

Commanded me by letter to submit

To all that he should order in their name—

This Bobadilla : 'tis by their authority
He has put this shame upon me—I will bear it
Until their voice shall order my release :
And afterward will I preserve for ever
These relics of the service of a life
And its reward ! These chains shall never leave me.

VIL. Can I do nought for you, then ?

COL. Leave me here

A little while, to gaze again on Spain.

(*Taking his hands.*) Ah friend, your love has lightened
not a little

My burthen : but 'tis heavy—heavy. Go :
Give me a moment here alone, I pray you.

(*VILLEJO bows and goes, R.*)

The seven years are past, and still my vow
Is unfulfilled : no army has set forth
To siege the Holy City. Seven years !
The New World, that we sought for Paradise,
Is made a Hell by violence and lust.
I am a helpless prisoner, disgraced,
Despised—and Beatrice ! Beatrice,
Who crowned the triumph of my year of joy,
The woman whom I worship, whom I love,
Noble and stainless, angel of the world,
I may not see—I dare not. I have sinned—
O Father, I have sinned !—and this my punishment
Is bitter : bitterest of all to think
That with mine own hand I could put it from me,
And dare not—must not. O my child, my girl !
My pretty Beatrice ! (*Buries his face in his hands.*)

Enter VILLEJO hastily.

VIL. Señor, they come—
The court—I know not who—in tumult—

COL. HA!
They shall not think my pride is broken yet.
(Turns away.)

Enter XIMENO, LUIS and RUIZ, R.

XIII. Where is the great Columbus?

Luis. Aye, where is he ?

RUIZ. Not here, I fear.

Enter Courtiers, Citizens, Fishers, &c.

Fisher. His ship was hereabout, I heard.

Enter BEATRIX.

BEAT. (*seeing COLUMBUS—aside.*) 'Tis he!
I dare not speak to him before the people—
Should he repulse me! (*Coming down L.*) Fettered!
Aye!—My King!

Enter FERDINAND and ISABELLA, Courtiers, &c.

ISA. Nay! The crowd's cry was true—he's here in chains!

COL. The Queen !

ISA. . . O how have our commands been wrested
From their true purport—Take those fetters off!

(VILLEJO begins to do so—XIMENO and others hasten officiously to help him.)

VIL. Stand back, you! This is *my* task. (*Takes the chains off.*)

Enter DIEGO and MARIA.

MAR. We are too late—but all seems well.

DIE. My father!

ISA. Columbus! who hast been so deeply wronged,
Noblest of Spain's brave helpers, without whom
Our reign had lost its chiefest glory—Dare we,
O dare we ask thy pardon?—Yea, forgive me,
Columbus! I can not forgive myself! (*Weeping.*)

COL. (*standing before her, presses his hand to his brow,—
tries in vain to speak,—at last throws himself
upon his knees before her, sobbing.*)

BEAT. (*aside.*) My lord! My noble love! Him whom
no fear

Of man or stormy sea could shake, a word
Moves like a child to tears: for joy he weeps,
And I could weep for joy and sorrow both.

FER. Nay rise, Columbus. We repent, be sure,
That e'er we listened to thine enemies.

ISA. But thou knowst we did never dream of this,
That thou—that thou, Columbus, whom we have called
Our brother, such indignity should bear—
Be loaded thus—Ah me! I cannot think of it
For weeping—oh forgive me!

COL. Nay, 'tis past:
Nought do I fear now face to face I meet

My sovereigns, who have known my heart of old.
'Tis but the slanders of ignoble men
Have wrought me injury—more injury
Than all my services could profit me.
I was judged as one sent forth to rule a city
Peaceful, long used to bear established laws :
But as a captain should I have been held
Opposing ever a fierce and hostile people
That lurk in forests and in mountains,—ruling
A turbulent crew of courtiers, felons, jail-birds,
The scum of Spain : if therefore I have erred
Let this and let my service speak for me.
Grant but your favour once again, and more,
Greater and richer, higher and holier deeds,
Than e'er before, will I do now for Spain !

ISA. Our favour ever while I live is thine.—
To-night at the palace we will hear thy plans
And aid them to our utmost. Spain can do
Little to pay what thou hast done for Spain :
But that she can, while Isabella lives,
She shall do. Brave Columbus, till to-night
Farewell : command our utmost power in all things.

Exeunt all but COLUMBUS, DIEGO, and BEATRIX.

MARIA (*as she goes.*) Follow me, Diego : 'twere not wise
to leave
Thy father's cause at court unwatched a moment.
Fonseca is not conquered yet. (*Goes after Court.*)

DIEGO. I come.—(*Rushing to COLUMBUS.*)
Father ! thy triumph crowns the happiness

Of this my happiest day—I cannot stay
Now longer: she awaits me,—soon again
We will meet. Farewell, my father,—

COL. Eh?—farewell? (*Exit DIEGO.*)

He's gone, ere I could speak.—Why, the boy's mad—
Mad, or in love. No matter, so he's happy;
And that his face tells. I am happy, methinks,
Almost: never quite again on earth.—(*Noticing BEATRIX.*)

A woman!

Who is it? (*She turns.*) O that white face! Beatrix!

(*A pause. He turns away.*)

BEAT. Columbus—I am here—Thou wilt speak to me.

COL. No—no—no. I cannot. It is sin.

BEAT. To speak to me—to Beatrix? Thou canst not?
Ah me, thou wilt not. Thou no longer lovest me.

COL. I love thee not? Oh Beatrix, away

In mercy!

BEAT. Having won my love dost thou despise me?

COL. I reverence thee—the world holds not thine
equal—

Away, away!

BEAT. Columbus, listen to me!

I saved thy life. 'Twas I that roused the people
To clamour for thy liberty—Didst think
I cared not for thy life? Was't that?

COL. Beatrix!

Would thou hadst let me die! Add not more links
To the heavy chain of black ingratitude
That drags my life—

BEAT. But, my love, wilt not tell me

Why thou art cold to me? I have been patient—
Indeed I have: I have braved many things
These bitter years: thou knowest I am true—
O heaven, thou dost know that?

COL. Too pure, too true
Unto a perjured bond.—I broke my vow,
That never would I wed till my life's aim
Were won, Christ's city freed,—I broke my vow.
Our love was as the love of man and wife :
Yea, in the sight of God we are wed.

BEAT. O then—

COL. Win happiness from my broken oath? Never,
woman!

We are punished : we must bear our punishment
Bravely, patiently, and apart—apart !
O God, apart from all life's joys !

BEAT. Columbus,
Thy love is not the essence of thy life,
Its very substance, inmost bone and blood,
As mine is, or these words that draw thy tears
Thou couldst not speak, but thy heart's blood would choke
All utterance—O thou dost not say farewell!

COL. BEATRIX, I must say it — Nay — I cannot.
And yet—Farewell!

BEAT. Haha! I have but jested
This long while with thee. Why, thou canst not leave me;
I know it well—dear heart, wouldst thou know too?
Columbus—**Husband**—thou didst call me **Wife**
But now: My **Husband**—oh, I think thou knowest
What I would say. Canst thou not guess my happiness?

While thou wast last away? (*Going to him, and putting her arms round his neck.*)

Hear me, Columbus.

Dear lord,—dear love,—We have a little child.
Thou didst not let me write—I could not tell thee:
But thou art happy now? He is so like thee—
Yet with my eyes: didst thou not love my eyes?
Oft hast thou said so. One day, I remember,
Sitting upon the strand—'twas the first time
I had seen the sea,—and we both loved the sea,—
Columbus! Speak! O God, thou wilt not leave me?
Not now—not now that I am thy child's mother!
No—no—Indeed, I've almost starved to feed him:
He is so well and happy—thou wouldst weep,
Methinks, to know what I have done for him—
For thy son—thy Fernando—that's his name,
Fernando. Oh my husband—No, no, no,
I will not call thee so: thou dost not like it—
O speak, O speak to me! Mercy, Columbus!
(*Clinging to him wildly.*)

COL. I have sinned. My heart is riven with agony.
I am punished—would I could bear all the woe!
Wife, thou shalt never want while I can help thee.
I charge myself with our son's life: in all things
He shall be equalled with Diego—dearer,
It may be, that thou wert his mother. Now,—
We must part, Beatrix: upon this earth
Never to meet again. Noblest and purest,
My life has ruined thine, and I can give thee
Not e'en as reparation its poor remnant.

Beatrice—this farewell kills me—

BEAT. Do not weep.

Thou art my lord. Thy Right is Right for me.

Farewell. (*Faints in his arms.*)

COL. One kiss on those lips—No. Not one.

O eternal word—Farewell!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE.—*Segovia. The City Gates. Sunset.*

DIEGO and MARIA discovered, standing by a low ruined wall.

DIEGO. The years steal by, Maria ; all in vain
Would men recall the season of their youth.
The light dies out of life, and nevermore
Awakens the sweet glow once let to fade,
That, cherished, should have grown from year to year
More warm and wide. Shall Time quench our love's
light ?

MARIA. Can it be quenched, Diego ?

DIE. I know not.
Only I know that hope will fade with time,
And with hope fades the halo from the head
Of truest love. Hear me, sweet. I am poor :
My father, who won years ago a world—
But that's forgotten now—who years ago,
Brought fettered home, was freed and promised all,
Now wanders old, unheeded, lightly used,
Put off from month to month, from year to year,
As in the weary time ere first I met thee.

I know not how we live; by constant toil
I can win food and shelter—for us three :
Enough, not more. I have no wealth to give thee.
Maria, wilt thou share my poverty ?

MAR. Poverty? Nay, but there are surely means—
Does not the crown owe money to thy father?

DIE. For years his revenue from the New World
Has not been paid,—nor will it till he gains
Some friend at court who has the will and power
To foil Fonseca : no one but thy father
Such power now holds—

MAR. And he has not the will
To use it. He is stubborn; he will never
Yield to our marriage.

DIE. And do you love him
The best—or me ?

MAR. Indeed, I love my father
Dearly—ah, very dearly : but my husband—

DIE. (*clasping her in his arms.*) Sweet! You are mine ?

MAR. I did not mean to say so,
But—if I said it—then—why don't you kiss me ?

DIE. My wife—my own Maria! (*Embrace.*)

Enter DE TOLEDO.

TOL. Ha! What may this mean? Were not my
commands,
Fair lady daughter, that thou shouldst not list
To any tale of love this Genoese
Might whisper to thee ?

MAR. Nay, my hasty father,

'Twas not the Genoese who whispered then
His love to me ; but I was telling him—

TOL. What ?

DIE. That Maria will be my wife, Don Ferdinand.

TOL. Thy wife !—And pray when may the wedding
be ?

MAR. To-morrow, if Diego will.

TOL. San Pedro !

Art not ashamed to look me in the face ?
And thou, adventurer,—be sure thou'lt win
No fortune here !

DIE. I need none, winning her.

We love each other, sir ; we are resolved
No more apart to waste the golden years,
But honestly as man and wife to win
Bread,—scant, mayhap, and so made sweet by
hunger ;

Between us shared, and so made sweet by love.

TOL. And this your generous love would drag her
down

Tender, unused to poverty and toil,
To share the bread of misery,—Unselfish,
Thoughtful, indeed, is this romance of youth !
You shall not have her.

DIE. Fear not,—you are mine,
Maria.—Sir, you scarcely know your daughter.
A woman's heart, fluttering through giddy life
Of dance and song, unwed to life's true cares,
Does not the duty Heaven designed for it :
Lightens no path, teaches no children faith,

Truth, love,—sweet lessons women's lips teach best
Nor learns from prattling tongues and innocent eyes
The secrets that a mother only knows.
Such life of toilsome pleasure is a desert
Barren of noble deeds, of brave forbearance,
Of tears, of truest happiness,—Maria,
Wife, thy soul's treasure shall not thus be wasted,—
Our lives are one.

MAR. Oh father, this is true!
We cannot live apart—'tis honest love,
Diego's: see! he weds me poor.—I ask not
For wealth, dear father,—only for your love:
Let me not lose that—O my father, love me!

(Embracing him.)

TOL. Why, girl,—well, well,—Sir—San Geronimo!
I never thought to be convinced—

MAR. But, father,
You know you're never stubborn,—are you, dear?

TOL. No, no, I'm not. A stubborn man's a fool.
You say well, daughter: I'm not obstinate.
Wherefore—San José! Here have I held out
Over a dozen years—

MAR. Then, dearest father,
You should give way at once, or people may—
Those who don't know you—call you obstinate!

TOL. There's truth in that. Well—take her, Don
Diego.

In one thing this your marriage gives me pleasure:
Were you my son-in-law, 'twere a fair pretext
To aid you 'gainst the haughty priest Fonseca.

I'll foil him : often have I wished before
To help your father all his rights to win—
Come with me now,—but I ne'er dared to offer :
Now that he's poor, the man is so damned proud !

(Exit R.)

MAR. Quick, quick, go with him ! *(Aside.)* Who is
this I see ?

Again—O I will speak to her. *(Aloud.)* Diego,
Waste not a moment—there ! *(Kissing him.)* Now run
along !

DIE. These matrimonial kisses seem more brief
And business-like than when we were in love :
Still—there's no limit to them !

(Exit.)

MAR. In midmost happiness comes this pale shadow
Of the old love I wronged and cast from me.
But not again will I the sad heart wound
Of her my worshipped sister—from our joy
Can I not spare a little that may soothe
The wanderer's ceaseless agony ? My Beatrix,
Here is a woman's heart shall cling to thee,
Tired child with helpless hands and tangled hair !
Press thy pale cheeks to my warm breast—
She's here ;

She sees me not. O miserable change !

Enter BEATRIX, slowly, looking far older, pale and worn.

BEAT. Back to the city, where men gaze at me
With rude un pitying eyes : they think me mad—
It may be that I am. I hardly know.

I wander aimlessly through fields and woods
Beneath the warm sun,—and in narrow streets
Sometimes I bind the wounds of misery
More helpless than mine own. I do not care
Whither Fate leads me, so I hide from him.
O he was kind—he keeps, he loves Fernando:
How could he know that it would break my heart—
To lose my baby? Many children die
And mothers bear it bravely; I'm not brave.
Ah, but he was my all, my only one!
He talked to me in that sweet broken tongue
Which was not of earth's language, but brought with it
Meanings from heaven—O my child Fernando,
How dost thou live without me? Art thou sad?
Perhaps he is crying now!—No, no: 'twas better
To part; I must not see him nor his father.
I am not good—ah me, we sinned, we sinned!
Maria will not speak to me—O heaven,
Why was I sent into a cruel world?
There are some think me a bad woman—ah,
They do not know me: I am but a child—
A child still. Let me lie down here and sleep,
'Tis all I want. Goodnight, Maria,—goodnight.
(*Lying down.*)

MAR. She thinks of happy times long dead; she
thinks
Still of Maria—and she loves me still!
(*Kneeling beside her.*) Beatrix, sister of my heart, sleep
not,—
You know me?

BEAT. (*shrinking away, and covering her eyes.*) No, no !

You are not Maria.

She hates me—O she almost cursed me once,
When I lay weeping at her feet—

MAR.

Beatrix !

For God's sake do not kill me with those words !
Darling, I loved you then, I love you now.
O you are dearer to me than my life—
I did not mean it, sweet,—I hate myself—
Oh pardon me, my sister !

BEAT. (*dreamily.*) What is happiness ?

Maria, once—before we died, you know,—
We used to twine our arms and lie together
Watching the blue sky and the moving clouds,
And we thought God was smiling on us. Then
We were happy, we said. We are wiser now,
Are we not, sister ?

MAR.

O my heart is broken !

Pity me, pity me, dearest ! Do not speak
Quietly thus to me, like a pure spirit
Lingering yet awhile within the grave.
I am unhappy—see, I come to you,
My counsellor, noble and wise in all things,
For comfort and caresses—It is I,
Your little Maria. Kiss me, Beatrix.

BEAT. (*kissing her.*) There, darling. What's your
trouble ? Tell me all,—

It may be I can help you. I will wager
'Tis no great sin weighs on Maria's soul.

No sin! (*Leaps up.*) You are pure—Maria, you must
not touch me!

Stand off—stand off! I am not fit to speak
One word with you. He says that I have sinned.
I have done—I know not what: I have forgotten.
Only I know I let him take my baby;
And then I fled—I must not look on them
To blight their lives. God's curse has fallen on mine.
I wander homeless, loveless, aimless ever.
I seek Death, and he comes not—but I hope
I do no wrong now. Do you think I sin?
Ah yes—ah yes—I am accurst; my life
Is leprous, and to breathe, to live, is sin.
Is it not so, friend? And Hell *is*. I thought
There was no Hell: but I have found it—here.
(*Clasping her heart.*)

MAR. O if there were Hell I would share it with thee!
Come, darling, come,—'tis rest you want, my love,
And food, poor child. O come, O come, Beatrix.
I cannot speak for tears—come, sweetheart, come.

(*They go out together, R., MARIA supporting BEATRIX.*)

XIMENO enters from the same side: dressed in rich mourning.

XIM. (*looking after them.*) Lady Maria de Toledo—hm!
And in strange company, 'faith,—ha! I have an interest
in the Lady Maria: I've often thought she smiled on
me—nay, sometimes I'll be sworn she's laughed at me:
have I not every right to find who her companion is?
The woman's face—what? No: it can't have been: so
thin—so pale and haggard—yet it seemed the same.
Beatrix Enríquez, by every saint in Spain! Nigh starving,

too. Haha: 'twould amuse Fonseca; and i'faith with the court in mourning we need amusement.

Enter COLUMBUS, through Gates, C. (He looks greatly aged—a brokendown old man.)

COL. In vain—in vain. Scarce to Segovia
Have I returned three hours, and first of all,
Truest of old associates, ill-luck meets me.
I would see the King: a scornful lackey tells me
“An hour ago he left the palace”—turns,
And quits me, ere I ask him for the Queen.
Ten years ago I had not so been stayed:
But—I am old now, and I am very weary.
The King will ne'er see me again, methinks,—
What profit, if he should? Of late her sickness
Has held the Queen a prisoner: and for Ferdinand—
Oh, he speaks fair, and smiles—with such a smile
As glides like wintry sunshine o'er the face
But ne'er to a poor shivering heart brings comfort.

XIM. (*aside.*) Why, 'tis the old Genoese, Columbus.—
Ha!

Now for a little playful raillery
About his quondam fair one.—Hail, old friend!

COL. What friend art thou?—Ah: I remember thee.
A courtier. Mayhap thou canst tell me, sir,
How is the Queen?

XIM. The Queen! Why, hast not heard—

COL. I am but newly to Segovia
Returned, and have as yet met none I know.
There are but very few will know me now.

XIM. How is she? That I don't pretend to say:
I leave such matters to the priests. Where is she?
That's a still wider question.

COL. Thou dost not mean—

XIM. I mean that yesternight Her Majesty
Breathed her last breath at ten o'clock—and I
In twelve hours had this suit of mourning made!

COL. What? She is—I am old. Speak plainly, sir.

XIM. Dead. (*Aside*) Deaf old fool!

COL. Dead! Isabella dead!

The glory of our state—the crown of Spain—
Ah, how will Ferdinand bear so deep a blow?
His Queen—and I but now thought harshly of him!
—Oh, could my words a moment ease his grief!
Surely the tears of any that have loved her
Will be grateful to him—

XIM. (*aside*.) Now a word of Beatrix.

Well, my most dear and honoured friend, dost know—
(*Aside*.) Fonseca and the King!—I'll not be seen
Speaking to this old vagabond! Farewell,
Columbus,—duty calls me,—we must part.
Would I could longer hear thy friendly chat!
Thou know'st I ever loved it. Fare thee well! (*Exit*.)

COL. Flattery thrives; lying's the road to wealth.
Were I a knave—I might have rivalled *him*!

Enter FERDINAND and FONSECA, L.

FER. (*entering*.) It matters not, Fonseca: she is gone.

COL. The King!—Oh, Sire, a moment since I heard
The heavy news—How fade all private woes

Judge not of others' motives by thine own !
Think not that all the world by such self-love—
Dark, ever-heedful, cold,—as thine, is swayed.
Think not all lightest words, and all grave acts
Of deepest impulse, still alike are measured
By mercenary caution : in a word,
Be not so proud, proud bishop, as to deem
That all the men and women on God's earth
Are low and false and pitiful as thou !

FOX. This to the chief and ruler of the Council
Appointed to adjudge upon thy claims !
Thou art right, Don Columbus ; by self-love
Thy words are not dictated—nor are mine,
Telling thee what I tell thee now. Sue not
This Council : it will nothing profit thee.
The King has no more hope of gain from thee,
And I, Fonseca, am thine enemy.
I have crushed thee 'neath my foot—Thou art so low
That I can tell thee this. Thou art powerless.
Writhe not, poor worm,—'twill but enlarge thy wound.

COL. Powerless—and I owe my fall to thee !
Coward and hypocrite, sent to preach love
And teaching hate alone—will not Heaven hear me
And pour down vengeance on thine arrogant brow ?
May the deep curse of an offended Lord—
O sinful wretch that I am, do I curse the Church ?
Do I curse God's minister ?—Villain thou art,
But go—thy holy office makes thee sacred :
Would it could make thee holy ! Go, my lord :
Spread Christ's sweet faith with sword and fire—show men

Hate is the only debt we owe our neighbour—
Lies, murders, are God's chosen sacrifices !
I am His servant, and I dare not touch thee.

FON. I am servant to the King, and I have power
To ruin thee : yea, every insolent word
Thou hast spoken, on thine own grey head shall fall
In fire again ! Win thyself influence
Forthwith at Court, or by my soul I swear
Misery yet undreamt of shall be thine !
Flee Spain, then, or win influence—if thou canst !

(Exit L.)

COL. Leave Spain ? Nay, wherefore ? Why not
perish here ?

What misery can fate still keep for me
Would add a moment's pang to my heart's burthen ?
The end has come. I am helpless. I despair.
Thank God, I am very old and death is near ;
Mine eyes see dully the sad world,—I hear
No longer Nature's lightest joyful whisper :
No longer western breezes bring to me
The scent of ocean's leaping waves : nor now
Life through my veins swiftly and gladly runs.
My work is left undone. A gloomy cloud
Obscures the glory I risked all to win.
True, it must pass—it must pass—but in shadow
We cannot picture sunshine yet to come ;
Our present gloom makes past and future dark.
Death—only Death I ask for : and Death is not
The radiant hope it once was—now at best
Dull nothingness and blank surcease of pain.

I was not wont to flee from pain: vanquished,
Scorned, old and poor, I am a coward now.

Enter DIEGO, through Gates, C.

DIE. Aye!—They said I should find thee—

COL.

Son! Diego!

Yet once more do I see thee?

DIE.

I bring tidings—

Great tidings, father.

COL.

Nay. Let me not hear them.

If they are ill, I have misery enough;

Seek not to add to it. If, crueller far,

They are good—O waken not false hopes again

In the last moment of a hopeless life.

Son, I am dying: with a mighty aim,

Would fill a young man's life, yet unachieved:

With tarnished fame, Diego, and with sin

Crushing my soul—Swear to me thou wilt do

What I command, to free my soul from this!

DIE. Father, I swear it by my love for thee.

COL. Find Beatrix!

DIE. (*after a brief pause.*) Art thou sure—

COL.

She lives? I am sure.

Could She die, and my heart not hear it? No.

She lives: but where and in what misery

I know not. Secretly she fled the town

When from her side I took Fernando—love him,

Diego; a right noble brother is thine:—

She fled, poor childless mother; and I knew—

In the long sleepless nights it came to me,
The bitter truth,—I knew that I had sinned.
She gave me all the love of her young life :
To cherish my child want and toil she bore :
She yielded him, her only joy, to me—
And for a vow then void I gave her up.
At the red altar of a fancied Moloch,
An unrelenting God, I sacrificed
The life my soul should have been given to guard.
I am dying, son : but find her—find my wife.
Thou hast sworn—my last hour is not all despair.
Thou hast sworn.

DIE. Nay, not despair—not thy last hour.
Speak not these words. I have news—O raise thy
 head,

Look at me, father. I have won all—won influence
That still shall gain thy rights—thou shalt equip
Of thine own wealth, the army of the Lord.
All comfort shalt thou give thy Beatrix.
List, father,—Maria is my promised bride,
And all the great Toledo's power is thine.

COL. Say that again—say it again !

DIE. He has offered
To win thy rights, thy titles, and thy wealth
From the King's Council, where his name stands highest—
Yea, if he use his power, above Fonseca's.

COL. No—no—it cannot be. No—do not mock me !

DIE. It *is*, dear father. Yes—I see you hope :
At length, at length your hopes, your dreams are true !

COL. Why then I am young again ! Now let Fonseca

Do all he may—my vow shall be fulfilled.
Great God, the holy city of thy Son
Our arms shall free: sweet wife, from east to west
You shall be sought for,—found, brought to your child,
Your husband—I am young again, Diego!
Danger daunts me not—when did danger daunt me?
Hope wakes—nay, Faith, that truth and right shall
conquer.

I have plans—plans, Diego,—great discoveries
Men dream not of, still hide in darkness,—still
I have work to do, and I can do my work! (*Pause.*)

DIE. Father!

COL. (*clutching his breast.*) What pain is this? My
heart!—(*Drawing a long breath.*) No. It is
gone.

Yet, there's a change.—Diego! See thou there!
Her spirit—She is dead! Too late—all too late!
—No—no—(*Retreating, unnerved and speechless.*)

Enter BEATRIX, followed by MARIA, R.

BEAT. Ximeno said that he was here, Maria.
Why should he lie?

MAR. You are too weak yet, darling.
Come back.

BEAT. Indeed, I am too weak to meet him.
I dare not—and I think he does not love me.
How can he? I will go no further.

COL. *Beatrix . . .*
My wife!

BEAT. No! No! It is not—is not—

COL. Hear me!

Pardon—I pray for pardon! Thou didst love me—

Poor child, I have no right to speak to thee—

Yet pardon me! I love thee—Beatrix,

Thou didst love me once—Oh answer! Speak! One
word! (*Sinking upon his knees.*)

BEAT. (*dreamily; touching his hair.*)

Columbus. Yea,—but thou art changed. White hairs,
Time has scattered ye—and hardship—Thou poor
head,

Have warring winds beat o'er thee, since—Ah me!

What sad long years have passed!

COL. I am very old,

Not far from death, child,—wilt not pardon me?

—She knows not what I say.—Beatrix, dear sweetheart,
Thou wilt listen to me—thou wilt answer—Beatrix,
Forgive thy husband!

BEAT. (*bewildered—dreamily.*) My husband! Hark,
Maria.

He is my husband. Oh, I dream—I dream.

I dare not move—I shall awake—It is heaven
To dream these things.

COL. (*clasping her in his arms.*) My love! Dost love
me still?

(*A long embrace, BEATRIX clinging to him timidly.*)

O joy I dared not hope, to clasp thee here!

Sweet joy—yet bitter joy, to see thee thus!

O cursèd ruin that my sin has wrought!

Black hellish sin, that cankers still my soul!

Would that my shame could slay me!— Yet, sweet
child,

Loved child of misery, thou dost not curse me.

What sorrows hast thou known, my pretty one,—

Through me—through my sin—yet thou lovest me,

Beatrix!

Why,—thou art trembling.

BEAT. Yes. I fear—I fear.

I know not why—this happiness is too great.

Columbus! Oh, what means it—Follow me!

Yes; I am going—O not far away:

Only a little—follow me, my husband!

(*Pause.*) My husband. It is true. I do not dream.

I am happy. Life is sweet to me again.

I have thee—and my child—I may see Fernando?

Yes—if I live. I am happy—I am happy.

I thank thee, God. I thank thee for this moment.

Farewell, Maria,—farewell all I love—

(*To COL.*) Save thou—save thou—I cannot bid farewell

To thee, my husband. Whom our God has joined

Nought sunders—not death—not death—Follow me!

(*Dies in his arms.*)

COL. Death? Nay, think not of death, child,—She
grows heavy

In my arms. Wake, darling,—let me kiss thine eyes—

They are open—she is not dead: she will not die.

Diego! Help me! I am falling.—There.

(*Sinking upon the ground, BEATRIX in his arms.*)

My wife,—my Beatrix—O God, she is dead!

This is some villainy—they have poisoned her—

Murdered, my angel! No,—see that sweet smile.
She is happy—'twas in mercy, not in hate.
I follow, child,—burdened with heavy sin
I hope yet: thou hast gone to pray for me.
Thou didst pardon—yea—and God is just—is Love.—
Into Thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit! (*Dies.*)

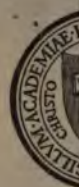
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